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Paris Olympics kicks off with vibrant performances

French gold medalists Teddy Riner and Marie-Jose Perec light the Olympic cauldron during the opening ceremony of the 2024 Summer Olympics, in Paris, France, on Friday; Athletes of France wave flags as they ride in a boat along the Seine River amid rain **PHOTO: PTI**

PARIS, 27 JULY

The city of Paris turned into a colossal amphitheatre, and the iconic river Seine served as a track for the athletes' parade as France showcased its cultural diversity, spirit of revolution, impeccable craftsmanship and architectural heritage in a riveting opening ceremony for the 33rd Olympic Games here on Friday.

The spectacle started with a dreamy break from tradition as 'Parade of Nations' kicked off the proceedings in which athletes from 205 countries and one refugee team sailed down the Seine on boats despite heavy rain, in the run-up to and during the ceremony, threatening to play spoilsport.

The ceremony also gave a sweet nod to 'Hindi' as it was among the six languages used in infographics to pay tribute to the contribution of prominent French women during the segment titled 'sisterhood'.

Before that French football legend Zinedine Zidane handed the torch to Spanish tennis superstar Rafael Nadal who sailed down the Seine along with another tennis legend Serena Williams and former track star Carl Lewis.

French President Emmanuel Macron declared the Games open, marking the formal beginning of competitions for the next 16 days.

More than a dozen former French sporting greats changed hands before wheelchair-bound Charles Coste, the oldest French Olympic champion at 100, took the flame to be handed to Riner and Perec.

The Indian contingent was led by two flag-bearers- two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu and table tennis legend A Sharath Kamal. The women in the contingent were draped in sarees, while the men sported the traditional 'kurta-payjama' in the colours of the national flag. A total of 78 Indian athletes and officials participated in the ceremony.

American Pop superstar Lady Gaga was among the first international artists to enthral the assembled crowd. The ceremony was helmed by artistic director Thomas Jolly.

—PTI

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India off to a decent start on Day 1 at Paris Olympics

PARIS, 27 JULY

Ace Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen beat Kevin Cordon of Guatemala in straight games in a group match of the men's singles badminton competition at the Paris Olympics here on Saturday.

Also, Medal contenders Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty signalled their intention with an easy straight-game victory in their opening group stage men's doubles match.

India's lone rower, Balraj Panwar moved to the repechages after finishing fourth in heat 1 of the men's singles scull competition here on Saturday. Also, appearing in his maiden Olympics, seasoned Indian paddler Harmeet Desai progressed to the second round of the men's singles table tennis competition with a convincing 4-0 victory over Jordan's Zaid Abo Yaman.

Manu Bhaker has experienced that on the biggest stage. Three years after the Tokyo heartbreak, she produced a supremely confident performance to redeem herself and enter the women's 10m air pistol final However, Indian shooters were eliminated in the 10m air rifle mixed team qualifications stage. Men's doubles match between India's Rohan Bopanna/Sriram Balaji and Gael Monfils/Edouard Roger-Vasselin of France has been cancelled due to persistent rainfall. *—PTI*

Lakshya Sen **PHOTO: PTI**

>>>More on Page 8

Valmiki Corp scam: 16kg gold, ₹2.5 cr cash seized

BENGALURU, 27 JULY

In a major breakthrough in the investigation into the Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribe Development Corporation scam, the Special Investigation Team (SIT) seized 16 kg gold and Rs 2.5 crore from two accused. Top SIT sources told PTI on Saturday that the raid was recently carried out and 15 kg gold was found from Satyanarayana Varma's house. Varma had also confessed that he had purchased the ultra-luxury Lamborghini car with the money obtained from the crime. SIT sources said one kg of gold was found from Kaki Srinivas Rao. Both were arrested earlier this month as the investigation intensified. *—PTI*

SEBI bans Vijay Mallya from securities market

NEW DELHI, 27 JULY

Financial market regulator SEBI has barred fugitive businessman Vijay Mallya from accessing the securities markets for three years, with immediate effect, on charges that he masked his identity and traded in Indian securities. The fugitive businessman is restrained from associating himself with any listed company or proposed to be listed company, in any capacity, directly or indirectly, for a period of three years. Further, during the period of restraint, the existing holding of securities including the holding of units of mutual funds of Mallya shall remain frozen, the order said.

—ANI

>>>More on Page 7

Modi chairs NITI Aayog meet; Didi stages walkout

Modi calls for achieving zero poverty starting from villages

NEW DELHI, 27 JULY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a meeting of the NITI Aayog Governing Council to draw blueprint of making India a developed nation by 2047 on Saturday but the meet courted controversy when West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee walked out of it in a huff alleging her mike was switched off.

The meeting was boycotted by states ruled by INDIA bloc parties except West Bengal. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, an ally of BJP-led NDA, too skipped the meeting.

In his address to the ninth Governing Council meeting, Modi called upon the states to take advantage of technological and geo-political changes to make India a developed nation by 2047.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi chairs the 9th Governing Council Meeting of NITI Aayog, in New Delhi, on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

Modi also called for setting zero poverty targets starting at village level.

During the meeting, Modi encouraged states to provide an investor-friendly environment and directed the NITI Aayog to prepare an 'Investment-friendly Charter' of parameters which would include policies, programmes and processes to be put in place for attracting investments.

Meanwhile, talking to reporters, Banerjee said her microphone was switched off after only five minutes, while other chief ministers including from Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Assam and Chhattisgarh, were allowed to speak for longer durations.

—PTI

CMs of 10 states skip meeting

As many as 10 states and UTs did not participate in the ninth Governing Council meeting of the NITI Aayog. The absentees were Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Telangana, Bihar, Delhi, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand and Puducherry. About Bihar, he said Chief Minister Nitish Kumar could not attend the meeting as he was busy with an Assembly session in the state. *—PTI*

EAM discusses bilateral cooperation with Laos PM

VIENTIANE, 27 JULY

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday called on Laos Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone and raised the issue of trafficking of Indian nationals through cyber scam centres in the Southeast Asian country and discussed development partnership and cooperation in areas like defence and energy.

Jaishankar is in the capital of the Laos People's Democratic Republic to participate in the meetings of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

He called on Siphandone along with fellow foreign ministers attending the meeting.

"Pleased to call on Lao PDR (People's Democratic Republic) Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone. Conveyed the warm greetings of Prime Minister @narendramodi. Discussed our development partnership and cooperation in defence, heritage conservation, energy, digital and capacity building," Jaishankar said in a post on X.

Jaishankar said he values Siphandone's guidance on further strengthening close bilateral ties that are deeply rooted in shared civilisational connect.

The Indian embassy in Laos on Sunday said 13 Indians, who were lured into certain cyber-scamming centres in Laos, have been rescued and sent back home.

So far, the Embassy has rescued 518 Indians. *—PTI*

KORAMANGALA CASE

PG murder accused arrested in MP

BENGALURU, 27 JULY

A man who stabbed a 24-year-old woman to death at a paying guest (PG) accommodation in Bengaluru's Koramangala on 23 July has been arrested in Madhya Pradesh.

The accused, Abhishek Ghoshi fled to Madhya Pradesh after murdering Bihar native Kriti Kumari at her PG in Koramangala on Tuesday. "Abhishek Ghoshi was nabbed around 4am on Friday from Begamganj in Raisen district and handed over to a team of Karnataka Police," Raisen Superintendent of Police Vikas Sahwal said. Koramangala police produced Ghoshi before 41st Additional City Metropolitan Magistrate Court in Bengaluru, and he was remanded in 10-day police custody.

Ghoshi, who has been studying in Bengaluru for the past four years, is the former boyfriend of Kumari's roommate. Having completed her MBA from Electronic City here, Kumari had been living in this PG since March and was employed as a business development associate at a learning platform.

Ghoshi often visited the PG to meet his girlfriend, who was Kumari's roommate, the investigation revealed. Kumari frequently intervened during disputes between the couple and consistently advised her roommate to leave Ghoshi due to his aggressive behaviour. "The victim's involvement in her friend's personal issues might have led the accused to attack her in a fit of rage or to take revenge," Inspector DM Nataraj of Koramangala Police told Salar News.

A chilling video of the incident shows Ghoshi walking into the corridor of the PG accommodation holding a polythene bag. He then knocks on the door and, later, drags Kumari out. She resists the attack but is soon overpowered by Ghoshi, who slits her throat and runs away. The attack lasted just 18 seconds, during which Ghoshi inflicted three fatal cuts to her throat before fleeing.

—Salar News with Agencies

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

REVOLUTIONISING DINING

Robot serves food in Bengal restaurant

KOLKATA, 27 JULY

Standing next to a national highway that connects the southern part of West Bengal to its north, a restaurant resembling a typical village house serves multi-cuisine platter to its patrons. But, it does that in style.

The food is brought to tables from the kitchen not by a human being but by a robot that can walk and talk.

Negotiating turns on its way, the robot named Ananya gently asks anyone blocking its route, "Please let me go. Please don't stand in the way and allow me to serve."

Painted in white, the robot is about 5 feet tall and has a rectangular 'face' which doubles up as a sensor-driven digital screen to help the kitchen staff transport food ordered by customers sitting at a particular table. Ananya has wheels but no hands. It also has four shelves placed vertically on which it carries the food. A human staff, waiting at the table, takes out the food from the tray to serve it to the enraptured patron who, more often than not, is found trying to cope with the amazement of a walking-talking machine standing right next to the table.

A robot named Ananya serves food at Mother's Hut restaurant near Krishnanagar, in Nadia district, West Bengal **PHOTO: PTI**

If met with a hurdle, the robot can turn right or left without toppling over or spilling the food items, to reach its destination.

The eatery is located near Krishnanagar in Nadia district, around 120 km from Kolkata, beside National Highway 12 (formerly NH 34).

Mondal revealed that there are plans to introduce more robots within a year, making services at the restaurant – from cooking to putting the items on platter and serving to customers – fully automated with the assistance of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

—PTI

Soldier killed, 4 injured as Army foils attack in J&K

SRINAGAR, 27 JULY

A soldier was killed and four others, including a captain, were injured as the Indian Army foiled an attack on Saturday by Pakistan's Border Action Team (BAT) in the Kamakari sector of Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara district, military sources said.

They said a Pakistani intruder was also killed in the exchange of fire, while two more managed to return to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) amid the intense gunfight that lasted for hours.

The BAT generally comprises Special Forces personnel of the Pakistan Army and terrorists.

In the attack on Saturday morning in Kupwara, a Srinagar-based defence spokesperson said, the intruders crossed the LoC taking advantage of the bad weather and poor visibility in the area and fired on a forward Army post from proximity.

According to the sources, the group of three intruders hurled a grenade and opened fire on a forward post near the Kumkadi post in the Trehgam sector of the north Kashmir district.

The troops retaliated, triggering a gunfight between the two sides and five soldiers were injured in the encounter and one of them later succumbed to injuries.

Security in the Union territory has been tightened following a recent uptick in terror attacks there. In the Jammu region alone, attacks in Rajouri, Poonch, Reasi, Udhampur, Kathua and Doda districts have claimed 22 lives, including that of 11 security personnel and a village defence guard member, this year. *—PTI*

MODI EXPECTED TO VISIT UKRAINE IN AUGUST

NEW DELHI, 27 JULY

India and Ukraine are looking at the possibility of a visit by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Kyiv next month amid renewed global efforts to bring peace to the eastern European nation, multiple diplomatic sources said on Saturday.

Modi might visit Kyiv around the Ukrainian National Day on 24 August and is expected to travel to Poland after concluding the trip to Ukraine, the sources said. Modi held talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy last month on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in Italy's Apulia. If Modi travels to Poland, it would be the first by an Indian Prime Minister to that country in more than four decades.

—PTI

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

Landslide on Shiradi ghat, vehicles stranded

MANGALURU, 27 JULY

A major landslide occurred on National Highway 75 in the Shiradi Ghat Yattinahalla-Sakaleshpura sector on Saturday, officials said. As a result, vehicles travelling to Mangaluru and towards Bengaluru on the highway were stranded on each side of the landslide site, they said. According to officials, personnel of the state highways department, armed with earthmoving equipment, have been engaged in the removal of the mud blocking the road. The roads will be cleared late Saturday evening or by Sunday morning. Following the landslide, the district administrations of both Hassan and Dakshina Kannada have advised transport operators and private motorists to be aware of the situation. *—PTI*

Leopard sighting sparks fear in Manipal, Perampalli

MANIPAL, 27 JULY

Residents of Manipal and Perampalli in Udupi district were alarmed by the sighting of a leopard prowling around a house in Perampalli late on Friday night. The elusive big cat, captured on CCTV, has sent shockwaves through the local community, officials said on Saturday. The incident occurred around 11:15 PM when the house's occupants were awakened by their dogs' barking. Sensing danger, they hesitated to open the door. Reviewing the CCTV footage later, they confirmed their fears as they saw a leopard had ventured onto their verandah. The footage showed the dramatic scene of the brave dog trying to alert its owners. *—PTI*

K-RIDE floats tender for Suburban Rail

BENGALURU, 27 JULY

K-RIDE (Rail Infrastructure Development Company (Karnataka) Ltd), which is executing Bengaluru Suburban Railway Project, has floated a tender for the much-awaited Corridor-1A from Bengaluru railway station to Yelahanka railway station. The second phase of the project from Yelahanka to the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) will be taken up next. Several activists have been demanding connectivity between Bengaluru City and the KIA. According to the K-RIDE officials, the tender value of Corridor-1A is Rs 1,422 crore. "The project includes stations along with formation works of at-grade and elevated section of 17.63km," the official said. The tender package comprises the design and construction of an elevated viaduct of 14.21km length, at-grade formation of 3.41km length, construction of 7 station buildings and Railway Over Bridge. *—PTI*

Let's build B'luru together: DKS to Oppn

Ready to take your feedback on Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill, Shivakumar tells Oppn

BENGALURU, 27 JULY

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar has called on Opposition leaders from City to join hands in building a better Bengaluru. "Let's set aside our politics and work together to build a better Bengaluru," urged Shivakumar, who is also the Bengaluru Development Minister, on Saturday.

He was addressing elected representatives of all political parties representing the City, who cutting across party lines participated in 'Public Voice-Government Voice' programme at Vidhana Soudha here to discuss Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill and issues concerning the Capital City.

"There is no need to worry about the Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill. Let's debate and we are open to take your feedback," he said.

Shivakumar said the Bengaluru Development Department is challenging, but they are trying to give a new shape to the City. Kempe Gowda built Bengaluru, Kengel Hanumanthaiah built Vidhana Soudha and SM Krishna made Bengaluru a Global City. "Out City is growing rapidly, and we need to act quickly to bring order," he said.

DCM DK Shivakumar with Opposition leader R Ashoka at a meeting on Brand Bengaluru, on Saturday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Highlighting infrastructure issues, Shivakumar said the previous BJP government incorporated 110 villages into BBMP (Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike) without providing basic infrastructure. "Water is a major issue, and we need to recharge groundwater," he said.

"We have received 70,000 suggestions from the public on improving Bengaluru and we are working on them within the legal framework. TDR (Transfer of Development Right) has become a big mess and we are coming out with a new system," he told the MLAs, MLCs and MPs from Bengaluru.

The minister said there are no tourist attractions other than Vidhana Soudha and "hence, we have decided to build a sky deck."

During the event, he released a booklet on "Brand Bengaluru" alongside Opposition Leader R Ashoka, Housing Minister BZ Zameer Ahmed Khan, and BBMP Commissioner Tushar Girinath.- *—PTI/Salar News*

'OPPN GAVE NOD FOR SKYDECK NEAR NICE ROAD'

BENGALURU, 27 JULY

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Saturday said Opposition leaders from Bengaluru have agreed to set up the 250-metre Skydeck near NICE Road. "We will place this before the Cabinet soon and take it forward," he said.

Shivakumar said: "The land is currently with the promoters of NICE Road. But R Ashoka (Leader of Opposition) said as per the Supreme Court order, NICE is supposed to hand over about 200 acres to the government. Hence, NICE Road land has been finalised," he said.

He also said the tunnel road plan was also discussed in the meeting with the lawmakers from the City. The first tunnel is planned from Esteem Mall near Hebbal to Silk Board with a length of 18.5km. "Along with the tunnel road, we have identified about 17-18 places for signal-free corridors," he said. "To build 100km of signal-free corridor, we would need about Rs 12,000 crore," he said. *—PTI/Salar News*

Renaming Ramanagara for development: DyCM

BENGALURU, 27 JULY

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Saturday said the government's decision to rename Ramanagara district as 'Bengaluru South' was to utilise the brand of the Capital City to give a new direction to the next generation and bring development to the region.

Noting that the government was not changing the name of the district headquarters town Ramanagara, he said only that of the district will be changed, which comprises four Taluks – Ramanagara, Channapatna, Kanakapura and Magadi. "We are not touching Ramanagara (town). Bengaluru is our district. Those living in Ramanagara taluk, Channapatna taluk, Kanakapura taluk and Magadi taluk are our people. Ours is Bengaluru, not Ramanagara," Shivakumar, who is Kanakapura Congress MLA, said here.

The Karnataka Cabinet on Friday approved changing the name of Ramanagara to Bengaluru South district.

"Today Bengaluru is famous worldwide. Why should we spoil the name given by our forefathers?" Shivakumar pointed out.

Explaining the reason behind the change of name, he said, "We are thinking about our next generation to give them a new direction, good thoughts, new ideas and their development."

On Union Minister of Steel and Heavy Industries HD Kumaraswamy's statements against the decision, Shivakumar said Kumaraswamy's politics revolved around wishing for his downfall.

"He (Kumaraswamy) sleeps and gets up thinking of our downfall even though we do good to him. I am aware of his actions, behaviour, sentiments, conduct and thoughts."

Responding to remarks of Kumaraswamy that the name of the district will be changed again when the Congress loses in the next election, Shivakumar said, "It's not in his destiny. Congress will return to power in 2028." *—PTI*

Film chamber opposes govt move to levy up to 2% cess

BENGALURU, 27 JULY

With 130 out of 637 theatres in the State on the verge of closure and the audience number dwindling by the day, the decision of the government to levy up to 2 per cent cess will only worsen the industry's challenges, NM Suresh, President of the Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce said on Saturday.

Suresh was addressing a press conference called to express strong opposition to Karnataka Cine and Cultural Activists (Welfare) Bill 2024, which proposes up to 2 per cent cess on movie tickets and OTT subscription fees. The Bill was passed by the government during the Assembly session on 23 July.

> **With 130 out of 637 theatres on the verge of closure and audience number dwindling by the day, the 2 per cent cess will only worsen the industry's challenges**
>
> -NM Suresh, President of Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce

The council had given its nod to the Bill earlier and now, once the Governor agrees, the Bill will become law.

But Suresh said representatives of Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce (KFCC) will meet Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to discuss the issue further.

"We have already appealed to the Chief Minister to reconsider and reduce the tax, especially for Kannada films. We have been invited to the Chief Minister's house and we are planning to discuss in detail not only the cess but also the taxation for theatres and the lack of subsidies for Kannada films," Suresh said.

While passing the Bill, the government had announced that the cess collected will be used for the benefit of the labourers involved in the production of films.

However, according to Suresh, the government's decision to create a workers' welfare fund is commendable, but this should not come at the expense of producers. *—PTI*

MIGHTY FALL

A huge tree, older than 130 years, fell and damaged a few vehicles on Maj Gen AD Loganandan Road, off Queen's Road, near Balekundri junction, in Bengaluru on Saturday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Meat consignment: Action to be taken after analysis report

BENGALURU, 27 JULY

A day after the chaos at Bengaluru City railway station over a large shipment of meat, Karnataka Food Safety and Standards Department on Saturday said samples of the animal meat found in the parcels have been sent to the laboratory for analysis. Legal action will follow based on the analysis report.

The consignment, weighing about three tonnes and loaded in cartons, arrived from Jaipur by train on Friday night. Tension arose when self-styled cow vigilantes claimed it was dog meat. However, Abdul Razzaq, the meat dealer who ordered the consignment, refuted the charge, stating it was sheep meat.

Food Safety and Standard Authority Commissionerate said, "The police department and officials from the Food Safety and Standards Department visited the railway station on Friday for an investigation."

The consignment, weighing about 3 tonnes, arrived at Bengaluru City railway station from Jaipur on Friday **PHOTO: X/@SyedAli38164231**

During the inspection, they found 90 parcels of animal meat being loaded into a transport vehicle outside the station. Samples were collected for laboratory analysis to determine the species of animals.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India licences of the senders and recipients are also being reviewed, and legal actions will be taken if discrepancies are found, it said. *—PTI*

City gets new app for reporting potholes

BENGALURU, 27 JULY

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has launched a mobile application called "Fix Pothole" to address the persistent road potholes in City. According to BBMP, the app uses GPS to pinpoint potholes on roads under the BBMP's jurisdiction accurately.

It records the pothole's latitude and longitude, measures its size, and generates a specific order for its repair. This system ensures transparency in pothole identification and repair, allowing for effective monitoring and control over repair costs by the authorities.

Bengaluru boasts a vast road network spanning approximately 12,878 km, with 1,344.84 km of arterial and sub-arterial roads and 11,533.16 km of zonal roads. The City's streets, frequently dug up for BESCOM cables, water supply and drainage pipes, GAIL gas pipes, high-capacity KPTCL cables, and OFC cables, often develop potholes.

ಬೃಹತ್ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆ
Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike
ರಸ್ತೆ ಗುಂಡಿ ಗಮನ
Fix Pothole

In the fiscal year 2024-25, the corporation has allocated Rs 15 lakh per ward for 225 wards, totalling Rs 33.75 crore for pothole repairs. The public can track the status of repairs via SMS updates.

The app is available for Android devices and can be downloaded from the Google Play Store.

For more information, citizens can visit https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.indigo.bbmp.fixpothole. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: SALAR

'EXCESS TRANSFER NOT FOR TEACHERS ABOVE 50 YRS AGE'

BENGALURU, 27 JULY

Karnataka High Court has ruled that female teachers aged over 50 and male teachers above 55 are exempt from being classified as 'excess teachers' during rationalisation and redeployment in other schools.

This decision enforces Section 10(1)(vi) of Karnataka State Civil Services (Regulation of Transfer of Teachers) Act, 2020, which mandates compliance with this provision.

The court's decision came while dismissing the appeals filed by the Department of School Education, which had challenged the Karnataka State Administrative Tribunal's orders.

These orders had quashed the transfer of two teachers, Umadevi Hundarkar and Prabhavati Ronad, from their high schools in Bagalkot district on the grounds of being 'excess teachers'.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice NV Anjaria and Justice SG Pandit said such beneficial provisions must be implemented in favour of eligible teachers, regardless of whether they have specifically requested it. The bench said this statutory provision grants a right to the teachers to be protected under the act. The court also noted that the two teachers should not have been classified as excess and transferred. The bench highlighted that this statutory provision grants teachers the right to protection under the act and noted that the authorities should have considered the valid and timely representations of the teachers before classifying them as excess and transferring them. *—PTI*

Get female doctors to examine rape victims: HC

BENGALURU, 27 JULY

Karnataka High Court has urged the Central Government to amend the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) to ensure that adult female rape and sexual assault victims are examined exclusively by female doctors.

This recommendation aims to protect the privacy and dignity of the victims.

Justice MG Uma, in her 15 July order, pointed out that Section 184 of BNSS, which oversees medical examinations of adult victims, is similar to the abolished Section 164A of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC). Both sections permit any registered medical practitioner, regardless of gender, to conduct these examinations. Justice Uma noted this is inconsistent with the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, which requires female doctors for minor victims, and similar provisions for female accused in the CrPC and BNSS.

Justice Uma questioned why adult female victims do not receive the same protections as minors or female accused, stressing the need to safeguard their privacy and avoid the embarrassment of being examined by male doctors. She highlighted that current laws offer more protection to female accused than to victims. The Court directed the Union and State governments to ensure that, until the law is amended, medical examinations of adult rape victims should be conducted by or under the supervision of female doctors. *—Salar News with Agencies*

CYBER CRIMINALS ON PROWL

Beware of scamsters posing as govt officials

BENGALURU, 27 JULY

If you receive a call from someone claiming to be a Customs official or a CBI officer telling you that you are involved in a human trafficking case, be cautious. These cyber criminals may even send you an arrest warrant with your name, contact information, address, and Aadhaar card details. This new scam tactic aims to terrify you, hold you digitally hostage, and drain your bank account.

Earlier this week, Sabeena (name changed), a corporate employee in the City, shared her experience with Salar News. She received a call at work from someone claiming to be a Customs officer from New Delhi. The caller said they had intercepted a parcel in her name containing fake

In The Courts of Judicial Magistrate of First Class Delhi

State Vs
Police Station, Delhi
Crime No. 13/2024

Warrant of Arrest

To,
The Police Officer in charge of,
Police Station, New Delhi.

Where as, stands charged with the offense of Sec. 359, 360, 364A, 370, 390, 400, 411, 413 and 414 of IPC, concern with human trafficking and money laundry crime. Are hereby directed to arrest the said accused and to produce him before me, on or before 24/07/2024
Given my hand and seal to the court.

सत्यमेव जयते

(Anurag Sain)
Judicial Magistrate F.C.
District Court Delhi.
Date. 24.07.2024

ATM cards, passports, and MDMA (ecstasy). "He told her the parcel was destined for Malaysia and provided the recipient's details. I was asked to come to a police station in New Delhi. He told me he was

- A corporate employee got a call from fake Customs officer. The caller said they had intercepted a parcel in her name containing MDMA. A fake warrant (in pix) was also issued

Kailash Chand, Assistant Commissioner of Police.

"Sunil Kumar, a supposed head constable of Vasant Gunj police station, then contacted me in a video call. I saw him sitting in a police station in uniform complete with the New Delhi police logo and I could hear the walkie-talkie in the background," Sabeena said.

"He then said Sanjay Singh, an HDFC official, had stolen all my data and created a new account and used it for fraudulent transactions. "

Soon after, a CBI officer named Anil Yadav contacted her, sending copies of an arrest warrant, court order, and her Aadhaar card, claiming she was involved in a serious crime. Yadav said he could help her if she cooperated and warned her not to leave her room. "They asked me to transfer Rs 1.5 lakh to an account for Reserve Bank of India to check whether I am innocent. I transferred Rs 1 lakh through Google Pay and the rest through net banking," she said.

According to police officials at Cybercrime, Economic Offences, Narcotics (CEN) police stations in the City, this is a FedEx scam in which the victim was cheated of Rs 1.5 lakh. *—Salar News*

Ex-West Bengal minister Biswanath dies at 82

KOLKATA, 27 JULY

Former West Bengal minister Biswanath Chowdhury died at a state-run hospital in Kolkata on Saturday morning, officials said. Chowdhury, who was an eight-term MLA, was battling cancer. He was 82. He was admitted to the SSKM Hospital last week, and he breathed his last at 6.42am on Saturday. Chowdhury, a leader of the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), was the MLA of Balurghat in Dakshin Dinajpur district. He was the minister for jails and social welfare from 1987 to 2011. Expressing grief, CM Mamata Banerjee announced a half-day holiday in all State government offices as a mark of respect for the former minister. Banerjee is at present in New Delhi to participate in the NITI Aayog meeting. RSP's general secretary Manoj Bhattacharya said Chowdhury's mortal remains would be taken to his hometown of Balurghat for final rites. —*PTI*

NITI AAYOG 'BLATANTLY PARTISAN', SAYS CONGRESS

Oppn says treatment meted out to Bengal CM unacceptable

NEW DELHI, 27 JULY

Congress on Saturday said the treatment meted out to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at a NITI Aayog meeting was "unacceptable" and alleged that the government think-tank has been "blatantly partisan" in its functioning, muzzling all divergent and dissenting viewpoints.

The Opposition party's scathing criticism of NITI Aayog came after Banerjee walked out of its 9th Governing Council meeting, claiming she was unfairly stopped midway through her speech.

The government rejected Banerjee's charge as "misleading", saying she had exhausted the time allotted for her speech. "The clock only showed that her speaking time was over. Even the bell was not rung to mark it," the PIB Factcheck said in a post on X.

Congress also targeted NITI Aayog, saying it had functioned as a "drumbeater" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi since it was set up 10 years ago.

While the Congress expressed solidarity with Banerjee over the developments at the NITI Aayog meeting, on the same day, its West Bengal unit chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury wrote to President Droupadi Murmu, alleging that West Bengal is in an "anarchic condition" and sought her intervention to "restore law and order" in the state.

In another post on X, Ramesh said, "The non-biological PM in his address to NITI Aayog has woken up to the realisation that India needs to make policies conducive to international investments, that is FDI."

Chief ministers of the INDIA bloc, M K Stalin (DMK) of Tamil Nadu, Kerala's Pinarayi Vijayan (CPI-M), Punjab's Bhagwant Mann (Aam Aadmi Party), Siddaramaiah (Congress) of Karnataka, Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu (Congress) of Himachal Pradesh, A Revanth Reddy (Congress) of Telangana, and Jharkhand's Hemant Soren (Jharkhand Mukti Morcha), skipped the NITI Aayog meeting. PTI

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar did not attend the Niti Aayog meeting in New Delhi on Saturday, officials said.

The state was represented at

NITI Aayog Governing Council meeting, in New Delhi PHOTO: PTI

> Niti Aayog belongs to all. The Opposition needs to look within. They have done injustice to the people of the states ruled by them
>
> -Piyush Goyal, Union Commerce Minister

> The CMs who are boycotting the NITI Aayog meeting have certain issues. There are very genuine issues. The Central government's actions were responsible for it
>
> -D Raja, CPI general secretary

STATE POLICE RECRUITMENTS

Rajasthan, AP to have reservation for Agniveers

JAIPUR, 27 JULY

Rajasthan government will provide reservation for Agniveers in the recruitment of jail and forest guards and state police, Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma has said.

However, the percentage of reservation in these services for Angiveers was not disclosed.

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs had announced that 10 per cent vacancies for recruitment in the Central Armed Police Forces or the paramilitary forces would be reserved for ex-Agniveers.

Several state governments also made similar announcements for recruitment of retired Agniveers in their respective police forces.

Meanwhile, Arunachal Pradesh government will facilitate training for local youths to prepare them for recruitment under the Agnipath scheme while retired Agniveers will be given preference during recruitment. —*PTI*

WILL CANCEL AGNIPATH SCHEME, SAYS AKHILESH

LUCKNOW, 27 JULY

Agnipath scheme will be cancelled "as soon as we come to power", Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav said on Saturday, a day after Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced reservation for retired Agniveers.

In a post on X, Yadav said, "As soon as we come to power, the short-term 'Agniveer' military recruitment that compromises the security of the country and plays with the future of the soldiers will be cancelled within 24 hours."

"This is our demand on 'Agniveer' ... The old recruitment (model) should be reinstated," he said in Hindi. —*PTI*

Modi holds meeting with BJP's CMs, DyCMs

NEW DELHI, 27 JULY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday held deliberations with chief ministers and deputy chief ministers of BJP-ruled states over a host of issues. The "mukhyamantri parishad" organised by BJP at regular intervals is aimed at reviewing key schemes in states, following the best governance practices. Besides Modi, Union ministers Amit Shah and P Nadda, who is also the party president, Chief Ministers Yogi Adityanath (Uttar Pradesh), Himanta Biswa Sarma (Assam), Bhajanlal Sharma (Rajasthan) and Mohan Charan Majhi (Odisha) were among the leaders who attended the first day of the two-day meeting here. —*PTI*

Dhankhar rues Oppn walkout in RS during PM's speech

NEW DELHI, 27 JULY

Rajya Sabha Chairperson Jagdeep Dhankhar on Saturday criticised the opposition walkout during the speech of the prime minister, asserting that he does not belong to any political party but to the entire country.

Dhankhar also rejected suggestions about the Chair's partiality, saying his inclination is towards the basic sentiment of the member towards the Constitution, towards the law and towards the country.

Addressing the new Rajya Sabha members at an orientation programme here, Dhankhar said it hurts when members keep looking for an opportunity to disruption.

"Political parties decide before the House begins that they will create disruption today. Is it appropriate?" he questioned.

Referring to the walkout staged by the opposition in the Rajya Sabha during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's reply on the motion of thanks in the last session, he said PM does not belong to any political party.

Ignoring time constraints, Dhankhar said, he gave more than 1.30 hours to Leader of the Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge and the Leader of the House Jagat Prakash Nadda, and did not let anyone interrupt them during the debate on the motion of thanks. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

DMK'S BUDGET PROTEST

Stalin lashes out at Centre, calls Union Budget a 'revenge'

CHENNAI, 27 JULY

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Saturday launched a sharp attack against the ruling BJP at the Centre over the 2024-25 Union Budget, calling it a 'revenge' taken by the saffron party against the country and warned it will face more electoral defeats since it was committing "mistake after mistake."

Explaining his decision to boycott the Niti Aayog meeting scheduled in New Delhi under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday, Stalin said he was 'compelled' to speak in the people's forum, seeking justice due to the "discriminatory attitude" towards Tamil Nadu reflected in the budget.

The state's pleas for disaster relief to the tune of Rs 37,000 crore and Chennai Metro Rail's second phase were not heeded to, he said in a statement.

Further, the BJP runs "the government with political motive".

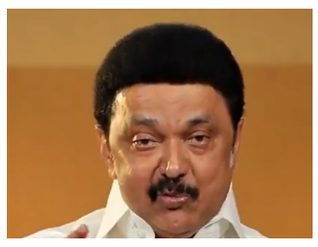


PHOTO: PTI

Meanwhile, Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Saturday flayed DMK for protesting against the Union Budget and said the allocation for Tamil Nadu was several times more than what the state received when the party was part of the UPA regime.

Pointing out that the DMK had no locus standi to protest, he advised the ruling dispensation to utilise the funds earmarked for the state, especially for projects like the Deep Sea Mission.

"The Budget on the whole is very futuristic keeping in mind Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for 2047. There's a huge emphasis on startups, employment, and women-led development," Singh said. —*PTI*

Myanmar PM, Doval discuss measures for forging peace

NAYPYIDAW, 27 JULY

Myanmar Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlain has met National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and discussed measures for forging peace and stability in the border region. Doval was in Myanmar to lead the Indian delegation at the 4th annual meeting of the security chiefs of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC).

At the meeting, they cordially exchanged views on friendly ties and cooperation between the two countries, the political progress of Myanmar, preparations to hold a free and fair multiparty democratic general election, and measures for forging peace and stability in the border region. —*PTI*

SC to hear ED's case against Soren's bail plea on 29 July

NEW DELHI, 27 JUNE

Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on 29 July an Enforcement Directorate plea challenging the Jharkhand High Court's order granting bail to Chief Minister Hemant Soren in a money laundering case linked to an alleged land scam. A bench of Justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan is scheduled to hear the federal agency's plea against the 28 June order of the high court. Soren, the executive president of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), had resigned as chief minister shortly before the ED arrested him on 31 January in the case. After coming out of jail on bail in the case, he took oath as the chief minister of Jharkhand on 4 July. Earlier during the hearing in the high court, the ED's counsel had argued that if Soren was released on bail, he might commit a similar offence and referred to cases against ED officers in the SC/ST police station. —*PTI*

Nitish chairs JD(U) meeting, discusses Jharkhand polls

PATNA, 27 JULY

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal(United) on Saturday said that it wanted to contest the assembly elections in neighbouring Jharkhand in alliance with the BJP.

Kumar chaired a meeting of his party at his official residence and it was attended by JD(U) working president Sanjay Kumar Jha, who is in charge of Jharkhand, Bihar minister Ashok Choudhary and Rajya Sabha MP Khiru Mahto, who heads the JD(U)'s unit in the adjoining State, among others.

After the meeting, Mahto said, "We are looking forward to contesting the Jharkhand assembly polls in alliance with the BJP."

Among the issues discussed with the party's supreme leader was the inclusion of Kurmis in the list of Scheduled Tribes. Kurmi leaders in Jharkhand have been raising the demand for some time and today it was seconded by delegates from West Bengal. We will now move forward by raising the issue in Parliament and before President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, he added.

Assembly polls in Jharkhand, which was carved out of Bihar two and a half decades ago, are due at the end of this year.

The state is currently ruled by the JMM-Congress-RJD alliance, which ousted the NDA from power in the 2019 elections.

Senior JD(U) leader Shravan Kumar said details like seat-sharing formula will be decided at a later stage. —*PTI*

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar PHOTO: PTI

Rift among communities over quota worrying: Sharad Pawar

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR, 27 JULY

NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar on Saturday expressed concerns over the "rift" among communities over reservation and said the Maharashtra government should have more dialogue with stakeholders.

The 83-year-old politician was speaking to reporters after releasing a book at a university in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar.

"The dialogue with stakeholders over quota that should have taken place has not been done. The chief minister talks with one set of people, while others in the government hold talks with different groups. This creates misunderstanding," he said.

Pawar said he recently shared his feedback with Chief Minister Eknath Shinde who appeared favourable to a dialogue.

"The government should call Maratha activist Manoj Jarange, (minister) Chhagan Bhujbal and others committed to OBC reservation for talks," he said.

Jarange has been demanding the implementation of the draft notification that recognises Kunbis as 'sage soyare' (blood relatives) of Marathas and reservation to the latter under the OBC category. Kunbis get quota benefits as OBCs.

However, OBC members, including Bhujbal, have stressed that their quota should not be diluted. —*PTI*

NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar PHOTO: PTI

Pak returns body of J&K youth who jumped into Chenab

JAMMU, 27 JULY

Pakistani authorities on Saturday handed over to their Indian counterparts the body of a man who allegedly ended his life by jumping into the Chenab river in Jammu, officials said. Harash Nagotra's family expressed their gratitude to the Indian government, army and the Border Security Force for the successful repatriation, they said. Nagotra, a resident of a border village in the Akhnoor sector, went missing on 11 June, and his motorcycle was recovered on the banks of the river following, which his family lodged a missing report the next day, police said. The family got the confirmation about Nagotra's death through a WhatsApp message from a Pakistani official after parents reactivated their son's SIM. —*PTI*

DE-ESCALATION & RESTRAINT

EAM invokes India's mantra to end conflicts

VIENTIANE, 27 JULY

India on Saturday called for de-escalation and restraint in war-torn Gaza while maintaining the importance of dialogue and diplomacy to end the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar highlighted India's stand on the two major conflicts while addressing the 14th East Asia Summit's Foreign Ministers Meeting here in the capital of the Lao People's Democratic Republic as part of the meetings of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Jaishankar spoke about two of the world's current most raging conflicts: the one between Israel-Palestine leading to trouble for Gaza and the other between Ukraine and Russia after speaking on the East Asia Summit (EAS) process, a decade of India's Act East Policy and the importance of open maritime communication for peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific Region.

Jaishankar on Friday met leaders from Russia, the European Union, South Korea, Singapore, Laos, Brunei, and New Zealand and discussed various aspects of bilateral collaboration.

"Call for de-escalation and restraint in Gaza. India continues to extend humanitarian assistance to the people of Palestine. Attacks against commercial vessels in the Red Sea are concerning. India is independently contributing to ensuring the safety and security of maritime shipping," Jaishankar posted on X after his address.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday held a meeting with his Turkiye counterpart Hakan Fidan during which the two leaders discussed bilateral ties and exchanged views on regional and global issues. —*PTI*

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar PHOTO: PTI

- Jaishankar spoke about two of the world's current most raging conflicts: the one between Israel-Palestine leading to trouble for Gaza and the other between Ukraine and Russia

Sea lines of communication critical for peace in Indo-Pacific

NEW DELHI, 27 JULY

The sea lines of communication passing through the South China Sea are critical for peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific region, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday, as he called for the substantive and effective code of conduct to secure them. He said India will continue to uphold ASEAN unity and centrality through our Act East Policy. Talking about maritime security, Jaishankar said: the "Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC) passing through the South China Sea are critical for peace, stability, prosperity and development of the Indo-Pacific region."Jaishankar's comments hold significance as his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi is also in Vientiane to attend the summit. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Kin of ONGC official to get Rs 2.85 cr compensation

THANE, 27 JULY

National Lok Adalat held in Thane on Saturday settled a death claim by ordering compensation of Rs 2.85 crore, among the highest in its 25-year history, to the kin of a man who was killed in a road accident in June 2022. Dhirendra Chandra Thakurdas Roy, a general manger with ONGC, died at the age of 59 on 19 June, 2022 after a truck hit his vehicle, which then crashed into a state transport bus on Panvel-Sion road. The compensation cheque of Rs 2.85 crore was given to his widow, two daughters and 86-year-old mother by district judge SS Shinde and MACT Member SN Shah. Advocate ST Kadam, who represented the deceased's kin, said Roy had a monthly salary of Rs 6 lakh at the time of the accident. *—PTI*

2 students killed, 13 injured as pickup van rams into truck

BALLIA, 27 JULY

Two school students were killed and 13 injured when their pickup van rammed into a truck parked in the Phephana area of this Uttar Pradesh district on Saturday morning, an official said.The victims, aged between 12 and 17 years, were from a private school, Ballia District Magistrate (DM) Praveen Kumar told PTI. According to police, the driver of the over-speeding pickup van lost control of the vehicle, which collided with a truck parked on the roadside near Kapuri Narayanpur village on the Ballia-Phephana road.Yash Pratap Singh, 16 died on the spot while Vishal Pratap Singh, 17 succumbed to his injuries while being taken to hospital, the DM said.All the injured were rushed to the district hospital, he said, adding that the condition of two is critical.Senior police and administrative officers visited the hospital. *—PTI*

Tribal family carries man for 14 km to hospital

GADCHIROLI, 27 JULY

Family members carried an injured tribal man on a cot for about 14 kilometres, crossing a swollen stream by boat, to reach the nearest hospital in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district, an official said on Saturday. Mallu Majji, 67 of Bhatpar village in Bhamragadh tehsil, about 1,000 km from Mumbai, suffered injuries while working on his farm on Thursday. His son, Pusu Majji, and a few others turned a cot into a makeshift stretcher and set out for the hospital, the health official said. The rural hospital at Bhamragadh in the district, bordering Chhattisgarh, is about 14 km from the village. Residents of Bhatpar have to cross a stream, which doesn't have a bridge, to access the medical facility, he said. Mallu's family members carried the 'stretcher' on their shoulders to one side of the stream, used a thin, long wooden boat to cross it and continued journey on foot. *—PTI*

SC sets aside HC's order in case against 'The Wire'

Plaint was filed over depicting JNU as 'den of organised sex-racket'

NEW DELHI, 27 JULY

Supreme Court has set aside a Delhi High Court order that quashed a summons issued to the editor and deputy editor of online news portal "The Wire" in a criminal defamation case over a publication on a dossier allegedly depicting the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) here as a "den of organised sex racket".

The complaint was filed by Amita Singh, former professor and chairperson of the Centre for Study of Law and Governance at the JNU, against several people, including the editor and deputy editor of "The Wire", for allegedly imputing in the April 2016 publication that she had prepared the dossier in question.

A bench of Justices MM Sundresh and Aravind Kumar said the high court, in its 29 March, 2023 order, exceeded its jurisdiction.

The editor and deputy editor of "The Wire" had challenged the summoning order before High Court **PHOTO: PTI**

It said the High Court, while finding fault with the reasoning adopted by the magistrate for issuing the summons, went ahead and decided the matter on merit and held that no case for defamation was made out.

The bench was also critical of the trial court's order of issuing summons and said the magistrate had not looked into the actual publication made by "The Wire".

The court had said the subject publication itself was not before the magisterial court in accordance with section 65B of the Evidence Act.

In an affidavit filed before the top court on 6 October last year, the JNU said on the basis of the records maintained by its academic section, no dossier of the description matching the contents of the petition was received or was available.

On 29 March last year, the high court, while setting aside the summons issued against the editors of the news portal, said it was unable to discern how the article could be said to have defamed the complainant, when it "nowhere says that the respondent (Singh) is involved in the wrongful activities nor does it make any other derogatory reference to her in connection therewith".

The editor and deputy editor of "The Wire" had challenged the summoning order before the high court on the ground that there was no material on record on the basis of which the magistrate could have summoned them. *—PTI*

PARL PANEL HIGHLIGHTS

'Telemetry system not installed in flood-prone areas'

NEW DELHI, 27 JULY

A parliamentary panel has highlighted significant delays in the installation of telemetry systems vital for real-time data collection and flood forecasting in some critical flood-prone areas.

The committee's report on the performance audit of schemes for flood control and forecasting, submitted to the 17th Lok Sabha and tabled in the 18th Lok Sabha on Friday, underscores the need for urgent action to ensure timely and effective flood management.

According to the report, the installation of telemetry systems -- vital for real-time data collection and flood forecasting -- had been completed at all stations except three: Khanabal under the Chenab division, and Sara Thang and Dambong under the Gangtok division.

The delay at Khanabal is attributed to a court case pending since 2018 while non-clearance from the forest department has stalled installations at Sara Thang and Dambong since 2017.

The Union Ministry of Jal Shakti informed the committee that an alternative location for the Khanabal station had been identified and installation of the telemetry system was expected to commence shortly.

However, the committee expressed its dissatisfaction with the prolonged delays.

Recognising the diverse topography of India and the unpredictable nature of natural calamities, the committee called for a comprehensive action plan and an infallible system to handle worst-case scenarios and improve quick-response measures during floods. *—PTI*

2 RESCUED FROM UNDER RUBBLE

Rescue operation underway after a four-storey building collapsed, at Belapur area **PHOTO: PTI**

3 dead after 4-storey building collapses in Navi Mumbai

MUMBAI, 27 JULY

Three people were killed and two others injured after a four-storey residential building collapsed in Navi Mumbai's CBD Belapur area early on Saturday, officials said.

The two injured people were pulled out alive from under the rubble after the incident that occurred at 4.50 am in Shahbaz village, they said, adding that the scale of the tragedy could have been bigger had 52 other residents of the building not been evacuated in time after cracks were noticed in it in the wee hours.

"The four-storey building with 13 residential units and three shops collapsed early this morning. A man and a woman who were trapped under the rubble were rescued and admitted to a hospital," Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation (NMMC) Commissioner Kailas Shinde said. The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and the personnel of the civic body's fire brigade launched a rescue operation. Around noon, the body of a man was recovered from under the debris, while the bodies of two others were recovered hours later, a civic official said.

According to the municipal commissioner, the collapsed building was 10 years old and a probe will be conducted into the cause of the crash. *—PTI*

Protecting live-in relationships will encourage wrongdoers: HC

CHANDIGARH, 27 JULY

Punjab and Haryana High Court has held that granting protection to married people who want to be in live-in relationships with their partners would amount to encouraging "wrongdoers" and promoting the practice of bigamy.

A bench of Justice Sandeep Moudgil also observed that such couples, who run away from their parental homes, not only bring a bad name to their families but also violate the right of their parents to live with dignity and honour.

The court order came following several petitions, including one filed by a 40-year-old woman and a 44-year-old man, demanding protection due to a "threat" from their families.

Both of them are living together despite the fact that the man is married and both of them have children.

The woman has taken divorce from her husband.

The court said it is of the view that the petitioners were fully aware that they were married earlier and that they could not have entered into a live-in relationship.

If the court holds that the relationship between the petitioners is in the nature of a marriage, it will be injustice to the wife and children of the man, it said.

India is a country with a diverse set of principles, traditions, rituals and beliefs that serve as essential legal sources, the judge observed. *—PTI*

Family covers up teen boy's rape crime in MP

REWA, 27 JULY

Police probing the 24 April rape and murder of a 9-year-old girl in Madhya Pradesh's Rewa, have found that her teenage brother sexually assaulted her after watching a pornographic video on mobile and then killed her, following which his mother and his two elder sisters helped in the cover-up, an official said.

The police cracked the case and detained the victim's 13-year-old brother, their mother and sisters aged 17 and 18 after interrogation of 50 people, intense questioning of the accused persons and on the basis of technical evidence, he said on Saturday.

"The body of the victim was recovered from the courtyard of her house where she was sleeping at the time of the incident," he said.

After the intense interrogation of the family members, it came to light that the victim's 13-year-old brother had slept beside her at night. It was found that the teenage boy raped his sister after watching obscene videos on the mobile phone, he said. *—PTI*

Rain lashes many parts of country, 2 killed in U'khand landslide

NEW TEHRI, PUNE/NEW DELHI/JAIPUR/, 27 JULY

A 42-year-old woman and her teenage daughter were buried alive by a landslide in a village here on Saturday following incessant rainfall in the Budhakedar area of Tehri Garhwal district, officials said.

The bodies of Sarita Devi and 15-year-old Ankita were retrieved during a search operation carried out by police and SDRF personnel in Toli village, according to District Magistrate (DM) Mayur Dikshit.

A retaining wall behind their house collapsed amid heavy rains in the early hours of the day and they were buried under debris, he said, adding that two other members of the family were rescued.

Violent currents of the Dharmganga river washed away three shops in Budhakedar, besides damaging several bridges, breaching approach roads and disrupting power and water supply lines.

People living close to the river have been shifted to safer locations, the DM said.

Delhi

Delhi recorded a minimum temperature of 28.2 degrees Celsius, a notch above the season's average, the India Meteorological Department said on Saturday.

The national capital's Air Quality Index (AQI) was recorded in the 'moderate' category with a reading of 122 at 9 am, according to the Central Pollution Control Board.

Chittorgarh, Rajasthan

Large swathes of eastern Rajasthan recorded heavy to very heavy rain, with Chittorgarh recording the highest rainfall at 8 cm during a 24-hour period, the Met office said on Saturday.

Light to moderate rain was also recorded in many places of Rajasthan.

Pune

The body of a 26-year-old man, who was swept away by floodwaters on July 24 when torrential downpours pounded Pune, was recovered by the fire brigade on Saturday, an official said.

With the recovery of the body of Akshay Salunkhe, a resident from the Katraj area, the death toll in rain-related incidents in Pune on Wednesday has risen to six, said officials.

According to the fire department official, a man went missing after being swept away by floodwaters in Katraj amid heavy rains on Wednesday. The incident was reported to the fire department's control room around 6 pm, he said. *—PTI*

Rescue work underway after a woman and her daughter got buried under the debris of a house following a landslide, in Tehri Garhwal district, on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

Man's intestines bulge out as Bihar GRP beat up railway passengers

SAMASTIPUR, 27 JULY

Government Railway Police personnel brutally beat up a person on board a train in Bihar, causing his intestines to come out as stitches on a recent abdominal surgery got ruptured, an official said on Saturday.

The incident occurred on Thursday evening when the Mumbai-bound Karmbhoomi Express train reached Janakpur Road railway station and two groups of passengers engaged in a heated argument over seats in the train, which forced the GRP personnel to intervene, said a statement issued by the GRP (Muzaffarpur).

The altercation took an ugly turn when a group of passengers, fighting for seats, beat up the GRP personnel, and in retaliation, they "used mild force to disperse the passengers", it said.

Eyewitnesses alleged that GRP personnel resorted to use of batons to disperse the passengers and one cop struck Furkaan on his still-sutured abdomen with a baton, causing bulging out of his intestines.

Talking to PTI on Saturday, Muzaffarpur Superintendent of Police (Rail) Gaurav Mangla said, "An inquiry has already been ordered to probe the matter... meanwhile, two cops were suspended after the incident. We are analysing CCTV footage and examining those who were present there when the incident took place."

GRP authorities have suspended two personnel following the incident. *—PTI*

Police release sketches of 3 terrorists involved in Doda attack

JAMMU, 27 JULY

PHOTO: PTI

Jammu and Kashmir Police on Saturday released sketches of the three terrorists responsible for the recent killing of four soldiers, including a captain in Doda district, and announced a cash reward of Rs 15 lakh on their heads. Doda in Jammu region has been rocked by several terror incidents since June, which is being seen by security agencies as an attempt by Pakistan-based terror handlers to revive terrorism in the hilly district. Releasing the sketches of three terrorists, a police spokesman in Doda said they are moving in the upper reaches of the district especially in Dessa forest where an army captain and three soldiers were killed in a gunfight during an anti-terror operation on 16 July. J&K Police announced a cash reward of Rs 5 lakh on each of these three terrorists, the spokesperson said. *—PTI*

Govt moves two BSF battalions from Odisha to Jammu

NEW DELHI, 27 JULY

The government has ordered the extraction of two BSF battalions, comprising more than 2,000 personnel, from Odisha to beef up security in the terror-hit Jammu region along the India-Pakistan border, official sources said on Saturday.

The Jammu region accounts for 485 kilometres of this border, interspersed with dense forests and mountainous terrain. About a dozen BSF battalions are deployed along the international border.

Security in the Jammu area has come into focus following a series of terror attacks in Rajouri, Poonch, Reasi, Udhampur, Kathua and Doda districts this year that have led to the killings of 22 people. *—PTI*

KEY ROLE IN VICTORY

Kargil hero recalls 8 Mountain Division

NEW DELHI, 27 JULY

Post retirement, Lt Gen Mohinder Puri plays a lot of golf to keep himself fit and busy, but 25 years ago the Kargil War hero led the crucial 8 Mountain Division that played a key role in securing and restoring the LoC, and capturing dominating heights in the most inhospitable terrain of Ladakh.

On Friday, the nation joined in marking the silver jubilee of the Kargil Vijay Diwas, as celebrations culminated at Dras amid a patriotic fervour.

Lt Gen (retd) Puri and several other Kargil veterans, who had played a decisive role in the 1999, were recently felicitated by the Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan in Delhi.

Asked about his memories of the Kargil war, Lt Gen (retd) Puri said, "There are so, many memories. But, the first success we got, that is the biggest memory. The officers and men we lost and that is a disturbing memory."

Nation joined in marking silver jubilee of Kargil Vijay Diwas **PHOTO: PTI**

"Every day, more or less, we remember them. Because they fought with you, for you, under you," he said.

Lt Gen Puri, who commanded the 8 Mountain Division recalled the major role played by this Army division.

"The 8 Mountain Div played a fantastic role in securing and restoring the Line of Control, capturing very, very dominating heights in the most inhospitable terrain. And, that was due to the bravery, courage, determination of our young officers and men. I salute them for the honour and dignity they brought to the country," he told PTI.

Capt (retd) Yashika Tyagi, who was part of the logistics unit also recalled the defining moments for her during the war.

Capt Tyagi, who was pregnant during the war, says both her sons feel proud of their mother.

Dwivedi, a doctor, says she recalls the day with "some sadness" but also with a "lot of pride". *—PTI*

TRIBUTE

Children pay tributes to former President APJ Abdul Kalam marking 9th death anniversary in Surat
PHOTO: ANI

Political struggles inside IPCC's climate meet

Media reports and accounts by IPCC authors reveal extent of negotiation over how the latest knowledge of climate change is presented to the public
PHOTO: FACEBOOK/IPCC

The UN's climate science advisory group, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), is currently meeting in Bulgaria to decide on a timeline for its next "cycle" of reports over the rest of this decade. That decision should have been taken in January, but government divisions arose over aligning IPCC outputs with UN climate negotiations, at a meeting that the IPCC chair described as "one of the most intense" he had experienced.

Political struggle over the final wording of IPCC reports is well known, but this division at the start of the process reflects the organisation's achievements. The more successful it becomes in disseminating climate knowledge, the more deeply imbued in climate politics it becomes.

I have studied the IPCC for 15 years and think these political factors are often overlooked. For instance, though the reports are written by scientists, governments play an integral role throughout the process. The IPCC is after all an intergovernmental body – it's governments that decide to produce the reports and give the final approval, not scientists.

Most notably, this involves the final line-by-line approval of a report's key findings in the "summary for policymakers" (the only bit most people read). Media reporting and accounts by IPCC authors frequently reveal the extent of negotiation over how the latest knowledge of climate change is presented to the public. This has lead to whole sections being deleted and open conflict between scientists and government delegates.

However, decisions made at the start of an assessment cycle are equally fraught with politics.

These include electing the bureau and approving the report outline. The politics sometimes come to light, as it did when Wikileaks revealed US manoeuvring to secure the election of the US co-chair candidate for a previous round of reports which were published in 2013 and 2014.

These struggles indicate the impact that IPCC reports can have on official UN climate negotiations, where its reports provide the knowledge base to inform a collective response.

Climate negotiations are characterised by major divisions between developed and developing countries and these same political issues have shaped the IPCC too. For developing countries, climate change has never been a purely scientific issue. It is a question of development, and participation in the IPCC reflects levels of economic development.

Economic resources and long-term investment are required to produce the sort of globally-recognised climate research that leads to a country becoming an influential member of the IPCC.

Although the IPCC funds the travel of some developing country authors and one government representative, developing countries remain dramatically underrepresented. At the same time, the IPCC's reports and global climate policymaking dramatically shape how a country can develop in future.

IPCC reports can also support the goals of climate negotiators and accelerate climate action. This was evident in the IPCC's special report on 1.5°C, which made world headlines when it was published in 2018, and which had challenged scientists to investigate a lower temperature target than the 2°C they had been working with.

The report legitimised the lower temperature goal and applied further pressure on governments to decarbonise faster.

Concerned that their collective approval of the IPCC report would signal official endorsement of the 1.5°C goal, the US, Saudi Arabia, Russia and Kuwait prevented official recognition of the report at COP24 in Poland later that year.Serving as a direct input into the negotiations increased the political wrangling over every word in the approval of the IPCC reports' summary for policymakers.

This was particularly the case for the report on mitigation, where the approval meeting ran over by two days and was branded as the longest session in the IPCC's history.

The summary for policymakers grew substantially through government attempts to elaborate and re-word the report's key findings.

If the timeline is delayed, and the seventh assessment cycle does not inform the international response to climate change and increase collective ambition, what is its purpose?

Establishing this in Bulgaria will be central to determining the success of the IPCC in future.

—Courtesy, The Conversation

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR ساہ

In India, head & neck cancer holds 26% cases

In India, nearly two-thirds of cancer cases are detected late likely due to low adoption of proper screening
PHOTO: PIXABAY

Around 26 per cent of cancer patients in India have tumours in the head and neck, and there is an upward trend of such cases in the country, a study has found.

The findings of the study, conducted on 1,869 cancer patients across the country, were released on the World Head and Neck Cancer Day observed on Saturday.

Cancer Mukt Bharat Foundation, a Delhi-based non-profit organisation, conducted the study by collating data from calls received on its helpline number from 1 March to 30 June.

Dr Ashish Gupta, a senior oncologist who is heading the Cancer Mukt Bharat Campaign in India, said that India is seeing surge in head and neck cancer cases, especially among young men, due to increased tobacco consumption and human papillomavirus (HPV) infection.

"Around 80-90 pc of oral cancer patients have been found to use tobacco in some form, be it smoking or chewing. Most of the head and neck cancer are preventable, unlike other cancers for which the reason is unknown. It is a preventable cancer that can be prevented with lifestyle modification.

"There is a need to raise awareness to quit tobacco and early check-ups for early pickup of the disease," Gupta said.

In India, nearly two-thirds of cancer cases are detected late likely due to low adoption of proper screening, he said.

Gupta added that the Cancer Mukt Bharat campaign aims to reduce the incidence and impact of cancer on individuals and communities through education and early detection.

- Most of the head and neck cancer are preventable, unlike other cancers for which the reason is unknown It is a preventable cancer that can be prevented with lifestyle modification.

"If found early in stages one or two, most head and neck cancers are curable in more than 80 pc of patients. In the field of cancer treatment, we get new medicines almost every week which can treat cancer in better way leading to better outcomes and good quality of life."A combination of surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, targeted therapy, and immunotherapy can be used for treating head and neck cancer. Latest cancer treatment has evolved to prioritize not just curing the disease, but also ensuring a good quality of life for survivors," he said.

Under the Cancer Mukt Bharat Campaign, a free national helpline number (93-555-20202) was launched recently, which is operational from 10 am to 5 pm from Monday to Saturday.

Cancer patients can call on this number to speak to leading oncologists directly or even do a video call to discuss about their treatment without paying any fees.Head and neck cancer was closely followed by gastrointestinal cancers which was 16 per cent. Fufteen per cent cancers in India re breast cancers and blood cancers make up 9 per cent of them. These data are in line with the latest GLOBOCAN data -- a database that gives global cancer statistics -- on India. GLOBOCON data is part of International Agency for Research on Cancer's Global Cancer Observatory.

India is expected to have 2.1 million new cancer cases by 2040, a big jump from the numbers in 2020, as per a recent GLOBOCAN report.

—PTI

Corrigendum

The story on the decline in the number of Indian Vultures was sourced from BBC. It was wrongly attributed to PTI. The error is regretted.

80-90% of oral cancer patients were found to be addicted to tobacco
PHOTO: PIXABAY

The colourful history of the Olympics opening ceremony

If you're planning to tune in to the Paris Olympics, you probably aren't just looking forward to the feats of sporting excellence – you'll be hoping to catch the cultural spectacle of the opening ceremony, too. These flashy events, which kick off each games, aim to tell fresh stories about the host city and country, and set new creative standards for live mega-events.

The ceremonies combine ritual elements from the Olympic Charter (the rules and principles of the International Olympic Committee) such as the athletes' parade and the raising of the Olympic flag, and cultural performances designed by national organisers. They showcase international Olympic ideals and also communicate things about the host country's identity and culture.

However, it took decades for Olympic opening ceremonies to reach this scale. At the first modern Olympics in 1896, in Athens, athletes simply entered the stadium to hear speeches and a specially composed hymn – though more than 50,000 spectators still attended. The 1908 London Olympics, the first to have a purpose-built stadium, were also the first to feature athletes parading in national team uniforms. With almost 700 athletes on the Great Britain and Ireland team, the games affirmed a narrative of Britain as the spiritual home of amateur sport, which ran through into colonial ideas of the British empire's "civilising mission".

Opening ceremonies continued in their traditional format after the first world war. At the Paris 1924 Games, the first to be extensively filmed, national teams marched, dignitaries gave speeches and carrier pigeons were released into the air. A troubling reality for idealistic myths about Olympic history is that the first opening ceremony on a scale like today's was the 1936 Berlin Games – "Hitler's Olympics". Berlin's opening ceremony applied the stagecraft propaganda of the Nuremberg rallies to a ceremony that aimed to normalise Nazi Germany as a world power, and even employed the same filmmaker who documented the rallies, Leni Riefenstahl. Olympics researcher Jules Boykoff calls Berlin 1936 the first major example of "sportswashing", in which states deflect attention from human rights abuses through international sport.

The torch relay and lighting of the Olympic flame is now a high point of every opening ceremony. In 1936, however, it allowed the Nazis to claim continuity between their Aryan racial ideal and ancient Greek civilisation. Organisers of the London 1948 Games, after the second world war, reframed the relay tradition as a symbol of international peace and the ancient "Olympic truce", where warring Greek city-states agreed not to harm enemy athletes during the original games.

Athletes of Spain and Estonia wave flags as they ride in a boat along the Seine River amid rain during the opening ceremony of the 2024 Summer Olympics France on Friday
PHOTO: PTI

Televising the games

Live television transformed opening ceremonies again in 1964, when Tokyo hosted its first games. Now that a global audience would watch ceremonies live, they gained new importance as opportunities for national storytelling and public diplomacy. For instance, selecting 19-year-old Yoshinori Sakai – born in Hiroshima on the day of the US atomic bomb attack – as Tokyo's torchbearer had deep national meaning and symbolised a new peaceful Japan.

Spectators arguably owe the grand scale of today's opening ceremonies to cold war rivalry and the ideological struggles around the Moscow 1980 and Los Angeles 1984 Olympics – where each superpower led a boycott of its rival's games.

Both superpowers also asserted what they saw as superior ideological values through their opening ceremonies. Moscow's contained what was then the largest ever cultural programme, featuring gymnastics, mass choreography and folk dance. Los Angeles mobilised popular music traditions and Hollywood glitz to advertise consumer culture and the American dream.

After the cold war, opening ceremonies continued to provide opportunities to change how the world saw host countries. The Sydney 2000 opening ceremony, for instance, strove to express a multicultural narrative of Australia which honoured Aboriginal culture, though critics thought the representations were stereotypes.

Sydney's torchbearer, Aboriginal sprinter Cathy Freeman, became a national hero after winning the women's 400 metres. Many Australians saw this as a moment of historical reconciliation with Australia's colonial past.

Opening ceremonies have often also narrated hosts' identities in contrast to others. In 2008, Beijing's epic opening ceremony advanced a unified "grand narrative" of China as a historic, world-leading power. London 2012's creative team contrasted the UK to China with a democratic and quirky image of the nation as a "mosaic" of diverse, individual life stories.Director of the 2012 ceremony, Danny Boyle, and scriptwriter Frank Cottrell Boyce took inspiration from the filmmaker Humphrey Jennings. Jennings co-founded the Mass Observation social history project (collecting records of daily life from hundreds of volunteer diarists) and made celebrated films about everyday British life during the second world war.

London 2012's opening ceremony has since become a focus for nostalgic national memory among many who remembered a mood of "happy belonging". Yet even in 2012 it caused contention, with one Conservative MP Aidan Burley describing it as "leftie multicultural crap".

More recent opening ceremonies have their own political stories. Sochi 2014's stirred up national pride in Russian history and culture weeks before Russia annexed Crimea.

Rio 2016's ceremony emphasised Brazil's environmentalism, and Pyeongchang 2018 saw South and North Korean teams marching together as a step towards peace.

Covid constrained what Tokyo's and Beijing's opening ceremonies in 2021 and 2022 could achieve, though Tokyo's selection of Haitian–Japanese–American tennis star Naomi Osaka as torchbearer gave rare visibility to racial diversity in Japan.

Olympic opening ceremonies often expose the gaps between representation and reality in how nations depict themselves, the silences of their historical narratives and the security politics they demand.

—Courtesy,The Conversation

PHOTO: PTI

38 suspected terrorists arrested in Pakistan

LAHORE, 27 JULY

Pakistan's law enforcement agencies have arrested 38 suspected terrorists, mostly belonging to the Islamic State (IS) and Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), in Punjab province, police said on Saturday. The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of Punjab police said in a statement that it conducted over 2,500 combing operations during the last week in Punjab and arrested 38 suspected terrorists from Lodhran, Rahim Yar Khan and Bahawalpur. It said some main activities of the ISIS and TTP who were arrested included Fahim, Waheed, Saud, Tahir, Subhan, Shahid, Umar Ayaz and Rahman Gul. The banned TTP militant group is fighting in Pakistan to impose the law of Sharia across the country. *—PTI*

Imran's party members organise rallies

KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA, 27 JULY

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) organised a series of processions and rallies throughout Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, demanding the immediate release of party founder and former Prime Minister Imran Khan, his wife Bushra Bibi, and other detained activists, Dawn reported. The party denounced the charges against them as baseless and "false". The protests on Friday, organised at the provincial assembly level, saw local PTI lawmakers and leaders taking prominent roles in addressing the crowds. In Peshawar, demonstrations were conducted across all 13 provincial assembly constituencies, with a notable gathering in the Namak Mandi area led by Provincial Higher Education Minister Meena Khan Afridi. *—PTI*

Japan's Sado gold mine is now a UNESCO site

TOKYO, 27 JULY

The UNESCO World Heritage committee on Saturday decided to register Japan's controversial Sado gold mine as a cultural heritage site after the country agreed to include it in an exhibit of its dark history of abusing Korean labourers during World War II. The decision signals an improvement in ties between Tokyo and Seoul. The mine on an island off the coast of Niigata in northern Japan operated for nearly 400 years and was once the world's largest gold producer before closing in 1989. It was also linked to Japan's wartime abuse of Korean labourers. Committee members, including South Korea, gave unanimous support to the listing at an annual meeting in New Delhi.*—PTI*

China: Typhoon Gaemi weakens to a tropical storm

BEIJING, 27 JULY

Tropical storm Gaemi brought rain to central China on Saturday as it moved inland after making landfall at typhoon strength on the country's east coast on Thursday night. The storm felled trees, flooded streets and damaged crops in China but there were no reports of casualties or major damage. Eight people died in Taiwan, which Gaemi crossed at typhoon strength before heading over open waters to China. The worst loss of life, however, was in a country that Gaemi earlier passed by but didn't strike directly: the Philippines. A steadily climbing death toll has reached 34, authorities there said on Friday. The typhoon exacerbated seasonal monsoon rains in the Southeast Asian country, causing landslides and severe flooding that stranded people on rooftops as waters rose around them. *—AP*

KAMALA DOESN'T LIKE JEWS, SAYS TRUMP

Trump termed Harris as 'the most incompetent and far-left vice president in American history'

FLORIDA, 27 JULY

Former US president Donald Trump ramped up his attacks against Vice President Kamala Harris, the likely Democrative nominee for the US presidential poll, in front of a conservative audience in Florida, claiming that she doesn't like Jews and Israel.

Trump criticised Harris for declining to attend Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's recent address to Congress. "She doesn't like Jewish people, she doesn't like Israel," he alleged about Harris whose husband, Doug Emhoff, is Jewish. Trump termed Harris as "the most incompetent, unpopular and far-left vice president in American history." However, Harris on Saturday officially signed her forms, declaring her candidacy for the post of President of the US and voiced confidence that she would win the high-stakes election on 5 November.

He also called Harris a "bum". "She was a bum three weeks ago," Trump said adding. "She was a bum, a failed vice president." Harris's campaign immediately responded to "Trump's strange speech."

"Donald Trump... insulted the faith of Jewish and Catholic Americans, lied about the election (again)... bragged about repealing Roe, proposed cutting billions in education funding, announced he would appoint more extremist judges, revealed he planned to fill a second Trump term with more criminals like himself, attacked lawful voting," read a statement put out by her campaign. Meanwhile, in his Florida address, Trump focused on reaching conservative voters and promised attendees that in a second term, we would once again "appoint rock solid conservative judges who will protect religious liberty". *—ANI*

Donald Trump and Kamala Harris PHOTO: PTI

- Trump criticised Harris for declining to attend Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's recent address to Congress

Netanyahu meets Trump at Mar-a-Lago

JERUSALEM, 27 JULY

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with Donald Trump on Friday at the former president's Mar-a-Lago estate for their first face-to-face meeting in nearly four years as the two sought to mend their political alliance. Netanyahu's visit to Florida came. a day after Netanyahu met US Vice President Kamala Harris in Washington. Harris has urged Netanyahu to reach a cease-fire deal with Hamas soon so that dozens of hostages held by the militants in Gaza could return home. The Health Ministry in Gaza says more than 39,100 Palestinians have been killed. The United Nations estimated in February that some 17,000 children in the territory are now unaccompanied. *—PTI*

TRUMP SEES FIRST BIG DIP IN LEGAL BILLS

WASHINGTON, 27 JULY

As former President Donald Trump faces a supercharged Democratic fundraising effort, a persistent drag on his campaign's coffers may be easing: legal expenses.

A new report shows that the Save America political action committee paid about USD 827,000 in June for Trump's legal bills — the first time a monthly total has dipped below USD 1 million in two years.

The Trump-aligned PAC has shelled out an average of nearly USD 4 million a month on such costs since July 2022, most of it on defending the former president in criminal and civil cases, according to an Associated Press analysis of campaign finance records. *—AP*

Today, I signed the forms officially declaring my candidacy for President of the United States. I will work hard to earn every vote. In November, our people-powered campaign will win

-Kamala Harris, Vice President

Israeli strike hits school in Gaza, killing at least 30

DEIR AL-BALAH, 27 JULY

Israeli airstrikes hit a school and a hospital in central Gaza on Saturday as the country's negotiators prepared to meet international mediators to discuss a proposed cease-fire.

At least 30 people sheltering at a girls' school in Deir Al-Balah were taken to Al Aqsa Hospital and pronounced dead after a strike that Israel's military said targeted a Hamas command and control centre used to store weapons and plan attacks.

Gaza's Health Ministry said 11 people were killed in other strikes on Saturday. Israel's military ordered the evacuation of a part of a designated humanitarian zone in Gaza ahead of a planned strike on Khan Younis on Saturday, as the country's negotiators prepare to meet international mediators to discuss a proposed cease-fire.

The military said it planned an operation against Hamas militants in the city, including parts of Muwasi, the crowded tent camp in an area where Israel has told thousands of Palestinians to seek refuge throughout the war.

The planned strike comes a day before officials from the US, Egypt, Qatar and Israel are scheduled to meet in Italy and discuss the ongoing hostage and cease-fire negotiations. CIA Director Bill Burns is expected to meet Qatari Prime Minister Mohammed Bin Abdul Rahman al-Thani, Mossad director David Barnea and Egyptian spy chief Abbas Kamel on Sunday. *—AP*

30 people sheltering at a school taken to Al Aqsa Hospital PHOTO: AP/PTI

Myanmar crisis: US, China join ASEAN meetings

VIENTIANE, 27 JULY

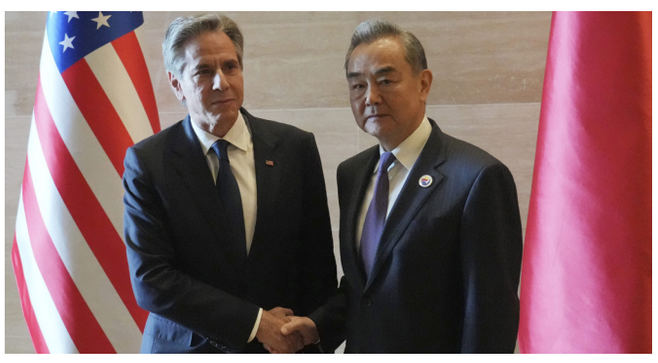
Top diplomats from Southeast Asia convened on Saturday in the Laotian capital with their powerful dialogue partners in the last of the three-day regional talks that have grappled with tensions over territorial claims in the South China Sea, escalating fighting in Myanmar, and regional rivalry.

Meetings on Saturday in Vientiane are bringing together in the same room allies of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations — including the United States, China, Russia, Japan, India and Australia — to bolster their relationships and discuss key security issues and other regional affairs.

In a meeting of ASEAN foreign ministers with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Saturday, Indonesia Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi said the bloc's good partnership with Washington should also contribute to global peace. She said they should be respecting international laws "in a consistent manner", whether about Ukraine, the South China Sea or the crisis in Gaza. Blinken said he hopes to work closely with the ASEAN nations on those matters, as well as violence in Myanmar and provocations by North Korea. The Secretary of State is expected to meet on the sidelines with his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, as both countries are looking to expand their influence in the region.

Indonesia said it emphasised in their opening meetings on Thursday that it's important the bloc doesn't get drawn into any rivalry between China and the US. ASEAN members Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei all have conflicts with China over its claim of sovereignty over virtually all of the South China Sea, one of the world's most crucial waterways for shipping. Many worry those direct confrontations there could lead to broader conflict. *—AP*

- The Secretary of State is expected to meet on the sidelines with his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, as both countries are looking to expand their influence in the region



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Chinese counterpart Wang Yi pose for a photograph in Vietnam on Saturday PHOTO: PTI

PLUMES OF SMOKE

Embers spark a spot fire as the Park Fire burns below Highway 32 near Lomo in Butte County, California PHOTO: PTI

Pak's debt from China becomes burden

ISLAMABAD/KARACHI, 27 JULY

Two key Pakistani ministers are camping in Beijing to discuss the cash-strapped country's request for rescheduling its outstanding debts with China linked to the ambitious China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

Muhammad Aurangzeb, Pakistan's Minister for Finance and Revenue, and Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Laghari, the Minister for Energy (Power Division) are both in Beijing for the last three days, media reports said here on Saturday.

The duo is meeting one authority and agency after the other, including Pan Gongsheng, Governor People's Bank of China (PBoC), and Cao Yuanyuan, Deputy Secretary-General of National Association of Financial Market Institutional Investors (NAFMII).

The concern is that China was initially reluctant to discuss the issue, leading to a delayed visit, signalling their disagreement with Pakistan over talks related to energy loans, media reports said.

"Pakistan formally requested China on Thursday to reschedule its debts, with outstanding dues for China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) power projects increasing by 44 per cent to Rs 401 billion by the end of the last fiscal year," The Express Tribune newspaper said.

According to power ministry documents, as of June 2024, the outstanding dues to Chinese power plants surged to Rs 401 billion, up Rs 122 billion or 44 per cent from the previous year. The Pakistani officials requested an eight-year extension for repaying energy debt, converting US dollar-based interest payments to Chinese currency, and reducing overall interest rates for both CPEC and non-CPEC Chinese-funded projects, according to ministry officials. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

- Muhammad Aurangzeb, Pakistan's Minister for Finance and Revenue, and Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Laghari, the Minister for Energy are both in Beijing for the last three days, media reports said

B'desh detain student protest leaders in hospital

DHAKA, 27 JULY

Bangladeshi authorities have taken three student leaders, who helped coordinate rallies against government job quotas, from a hospital following days of deadly nationwide protests and state-imposed curfews and communication blocks.

Officers reportedly forced the discharge of three leaders of the Students Against Discrimination movement from the Gonoshasthaya Kendra hospital in the capital, Dhaka, on Friday. Police had initially denied that Nahid Islam, Abu Bakar Mazumdar and Asif Mahmud were taken into custody. But Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan subsequently told reporters: "They themselves were feeling insecure. They think that some people were threatening them."

While Khan did not confirm whether the three had been formally arrested, he told reporters late on Friday, "We think for their own security they needed to be interrogated to find out who was threatening them. After the interrogation, we will take the next course of action." Security forces also picked up a ward boy from the hospital in the Dhanmondi area and seized the phones of Islam's mother and wife, along with those of Mazumdar and Mahmud.

The incident took place an hour after an Al Jazeera team tried to interview them, but their rooms had been cordoned off. Islam had told reporters last week that he feared for his life after being taken from a friend's house and tortured.

At least 150 people have been killed and thousands have been arrested since the protests turned violent last week as pro-government student groups attacked rallies.

—Courtesy, Al Jazeera

NEW STUDY

Scientists report trees absorb methane as well

BIRMINGHAM, 27 JULY

Tree bark in the world's forests absorbs the greenhouse gas methane, my colleagues and I have demonstrated for the first time on a global scale – a discovery that could have big implications for tackling climate change.

As trees photosynthesise, their leaves take up carbon dioxide (CO_2) and lock it away as biomass in their trunks and branches providing a long-term store of carbon. But now, our large-scale study proves that there's another way that trees absorb greenhouse gases – so forests can provide even more climate benefits than previously thought.

Methane has contributed about a third of the observed climate warming since preindustrial times. Concentrations of methane in the atmosphere have been rising rapidly for the best part of two decades.

That's a real problem for Earth's climate because methane traps much more heat in the atmosphere than the equivalent amount of CO_2. But while CO_2 can last in the atmosphere for hundreds of years, methane has a lifetime of around ten years.

This short atmospheric lifetime means that any changes to sources of methane or processes that remove methane from the atmosphere (known as methane sinks) can have rapid effects. If removal is enhanced, this can be a quick climate win helping to mitigate escalating climate change. That's why researchers are so interested in understanding how methane gets into the atmosphere and how different processes remove it. It's why my team of ecologists and climate scientists have been studying the exchange of methane between tree bark, a surface that had previously been overlooked for its climate contribution, and the atmosphere.

Next, we investigated whether this was a globally important process. To do this we needed to calculate the global area of tree bark. Using a technique called terrestrial laser scanning, we mapped tree woody surfaces down to the finest twig.

—Courtesy, The Conversation

Researchers measure methane exchange on trees in Peru PHOTO: CC BY-ND

Sanctions remain a key hurdle in Venezuela

CARACAS, 27 JULY

"Life has been hard for years now. It's true that food prices have come down recently, but they're still so high," says Rodrigo, a private security guard working in Caracas, Venezuela's capital. He did not want to give his last name.

Amid a decades-long economic crisis, Rodrigo thinks that "people are ready for a change." On Sunday, he will join 21 million people who are eligible to vote in picking the country's next president. The general election falls on the birthday of Hugo Chavez. While Chavez had a troubling record on human rights, the charismatic left-wing leader – who governed Venezuela from 1999 until his death in 2013 – was celebrated as a champion of the poor.

His less popular successor, Nicolas Maduro, is now up against opposition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia, a retired diplomat. And polls show Gonzalez leading by a wide margin.

During his tenure, Chavez successfully used high oil prices – the lifeblood of Venezuela's economy – to double Venezuela's GDP per capita. Welfare programmes were expanded and poverty and unemployment fell.

—Al Jazeera

- Amid a decades-long economic crisis, Rodrigo thinks that "people are ready for a change." On Sunday, he will join 21 million people who are eligible to vote in picking the country's next president

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Manoj Mittal takes charge as CMD of SIDBI

NEW DELHI, 27 JULY

Manoj Mittal has taken charge as Chairman and Managing Director of Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), following his appointment by the Centre. Prior to this, he was the managing director of Industrial Finance Corporation of India (IFCI). Mittal has over 33 years of experience in the financial services sector, including his previous tenures as MD and CEO of IFCI and Deputy Managing Director at SIDBI, an official statement said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: GMDC

GMDC Q1 profit falls 16 pc to Rs 184 cr

NEW DELHI, 27 JULY

Gujarat Mineral Development Corporation (GMDC) has reported 15.8 per cent decline in consolidated profit at Rs 184.05 crore for the quarter ended June 30, 2024.The company had logged a profit of Rs 218.70 crore in the year-ago period, GMDC said in a filing. However, income during April-June FY25 increased to Rs 877.90 crore from Rs 826.77 crore in the year-ago period. The total lignite production during the quarter increased to 22.96 lakh tonne from 18.27 lakh tonne in the year-ago period. Revenue from thermal projects increased to Rs 28 crore as against Rs 17 crore in March quarter FY24. Revenue from wind projects rose 67 per cent to Rs 40 crore in Q1FY25 compared to Rs 24 crore in Q4FY24. In a statement, GMDC Managing Director Roopwant Singh said April-June proved to be a pivotal quarter for the company whose strategic initiatives paid off with a remarkable revenue from operations. GMDC is the country's second-largest lignite-producing company and the top merchant seller of lignite. *—PTI*

Jorhat-Delhi daily flight likely from October

GUWAHATI, 27 JULY

A daily flight between New Delhi and the eastern Assam town of Jorhat would start in October, Lok Sabha MP Gaurav Gogoi said. SpiceJet will operate an 189-seater plane on the route under the regional connectivity scheme UDAN, he said. In a statement, Gogoi said the information was shared with him by Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu. At present, Jorhat has air connectivity to Kolkata, Dibrugarh and Tezpur, and IndiGo operates the flight. *—PTI*

Govt to decide on sugar MSP hike in coming days

MSP of sugar has remained unchanged at Rs 31 per kg since 2019

MUMBAI, 27 JULY

The government is likely to take a decision on increasing the minimum selling price (MSP) of sugar within the next few days, Union Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra said on Saturday.

Speaking on the sidelines of a conference organised by All India Sugar Trade Association (AISTA), Chopra said, "We are discussing the MSP (proposal). In the coming days, we will hopefully take a call."

MSP of sugar has remained unchanged at Rs 31 per kg since 2019, despite annual hikes in the fair and remunerative price (FRP) paid to sugarcane farmers.

Industry bodies, including National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories (NFCSF), have urged the government to raise the MSP to at least Rs 42 per kg to help mills sustain operations amid rising production costs.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Chopra noted that sugar production for the 2024-25 season (October-September) looks promising, with the area sown to sugarcane increasing to 58 lakh hectare so far from 57 lakh hectare during the same period last year.

For the 2023-24 season, sugar production is estimated at 32 million tonne, lower than 32.8 million tonne in the previous season, but sufficient to meet the domestic demand of 27 million tonne.

- Industry bodies, including National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories (NFCSF), have urged the government to raise the MSP to at least Rs 42 per kg to help mills sustain operations amid rising production costs

Earlier, addressing the event, the food secretary also mentioned that the agriculture ministry is conducting research to evaluate water requirements for ethanol production from various feedstocks, with preliminary findings suggesting that ethanol from sugarcane may require less water than ethanol from maize and rice. *—PTI*

We need consistent sugar policy: Kant

MUMBAI, 27 JULY

PHOTO: Amitabhkant.co.in

G20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant on Saturday advocated for a "long-term predictability and consistency policy" for the sugar sector, which he said would be crucial in making India a developed economy by 2047.

Kant's comments come as the industry presses for lifting a sugar export ban and increasing the minimum selling price of sugar in line with cane prices, among other demands.

"I totally agree that we need a long-term predictability and consistency of the policy. Otherwise, it will be difficult for the sector," Kant said at a conference organized by All India Sugar Trade Association (AISTA).

Highlighting the sector's importance, Kant noted that sugar contributes 1.1 per cent to the country's GDP and plays a pivotal role in reducing crude import bills, energy transition, promoting circular economy, and achieving net zero emissions.

"The sugar industry will be a major driver to make India a developed economy by 2047," he added.

Kant urged the industry to explore diversification beyond ethanol and invest in research for developing high-yielding, low water-consuming cane varieties, given India's limited water resources compared to the top producer Brazil.

Union Minister of State for Food Nimuben Bambhaniya said the government has taken several steps towards making India self sufficient in sugar. *—PTI*

SEBI bans Mallya from securities for three years

NEW DELHI, 26 JULY

Financial market regulator SEBI has barred fugitive businessman Vijay Mallya from accessing the securities markets for three years, with immediate effect, on charges that he masked his identity and traded in Indian securities.

In an order released on Friday on the regulator's website, SEBI said Mallya is restrained from accessing the securities market and further prohibited from buying, selling or otherwise dealing in securities, directly or indirectly, or being associated with the securities market in any manner, for a period of three years.

The fugitive businessman is further restrained from associating himself with any listed company or proposed to be listed company, in any capacity, directly or indirectly, for a period of three years.

Further, during the period of restraint, the existing holding of securities including the holding of units of mutual funds of Mallya shall remain frozen, the order said.

Vijay Mallya PHOTO: AP

SEBI, in its 37-page order, stated that it is clearly established that Mallya has abused the Foreign Institutional Investment mechanism or route for investing his surplus funds kept abroad and had not revealed the same to the investors of these companies in India.

"I, therefore, find that the Noticee has glaringly resorted to making investments through the FII route by masking his identity under the garb of an FII i.e. Matterhorn Ventures to the detriment of the interest of shareholders of Indian companies," the order read.

"Such acts of the Noticee are not only fraudulent and deceptive but are a threat to the integrity of the securities market," the order read. *—ANI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

LOGISTICS FIRM TCI POSTS 10% RISE IN Q1 PROFIT

NEW DELHI, 27 JULY

Logistics company TCI on Saturday reported 10 per cent rise in consolidated profit after tax (PAT) at Rs 91.6 crore for the quarter ended June 30, 2024.

The company had posted a PAT of Rs 83.2 crore for the year-ago period, Transport Corporation of India (TCI) said in a filing to BSE.

Income rose to Rs 1,056 crore from Rs 958.3 crore in the year-ago period, the filing said.

"We have delivered a robust performance in the first quarter of FY2025. All our product segments serving various industry verticals have grown, especially coastal shipping, rail multimodal solutions, 3PL/warehousing and cold chain logistics. Our focus remains on providing value added and technologically advanced customized offerings to our customers," Managing Director Vineet Agarwal said. *—PTI*

India marked 1.4L registered startups; UP before Gujarat

NEW DELHI, 27 JULY

The number of startups in India has increased to more than 1.4 lakh, highlighted Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, Jitin Prasada, in Rajya Sabha.

According to a written response by the minister in the house on Friday, the number of Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) recognized startups State/UT-wise has shown that Maharashtra tops the list with 25,044 registered startups.

Karnataka is second with 15,019 registered startups, followed by Delhi with 14,734 startups. Uttar Pradesh has secured the fourth place with 13,299 startups, while Gujarat is in fifth place with 11,436 startups.

The minister also informed that the Government has undertaken various efforts to promote and support startups in the country. He stated that the Government, with the objective of building a strong ecosystem for nurturing innovation, startups, and encouraging investments in the startup ecosystem of the country, launched the Startup India initiative on January 16, 2016.

The minister also added the 'Startup India Action Plan' comprises 19 action items spanning across areas such as "Simplification and handholding," "Funding support and incentives," and "Industry-academia partnership and incubation." The Action Plan laid the foundation of Government support, schemes, and incentives envisaged to create a vibrant startup ecosystem in the country.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

In the other scheme 'Startup India: The Way Ahead' includes actionable plans for the promotion of ease of doing business for startups, a greater role of technology in executing various reforms, building capacities of stakeholders, and enabling a digital Aatmanirbhar Bharat. The Government has also established a Fund of Funds for Startups (FFS) with a corpus of Rs 10,000 crore to meet the funding needs of startups. DPIIT is the monitoring agency and Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) is the operating agency for FFS. The total corpus of Rs 10,000 crore is envisaged to be provided over the 14th and 15th Finance Commission cycles based on the progress of the scheme and the availability of funds. *—ANI*

Sebi confirms order against 12 entities in V Marc

NEW DELHI, 27 JULY

Sebi on Friday affirmed its earlier order with some modifications against 12 entities, including promoter of V Marc India Ltd for engaging in a fraudulent scheme to manipulate volumes and price of the company's shares.

Passing a 121-page confirmatory order with some modifications, Sebi restrained 12 entities from the securities market. "I, hereby confirm the directions of the interim order dated February 28, 2024, subject to the following modification - the total liability for the alleged illegal gains to be impounded stands modified to Rs 6.30 crore as Jai Kishorr Singhal has deposited the alleged illegal gains made by him," Sebi's whole time member Ananth Narayan G said in the confirmatory order.

PHOTO: LEGAL NEWS

The watchdog also noted observations made in the present order are tentative in nature and pending further investigation. The probe will be carried out without being influenced by any of the directions passed or any observation made either in the interim order or in the present order.

Based on the outcome of the investigation, appropriate proceedings may be initiated in accordance with law, the regulator said. "...find that the submissions of the entities are insufficient to refute the prima facie conclusions drawn against them in the interim order.

In February, Sebi had passed an interim order and barred 12 entities including promoter of V Marc India Ltd, from the securities market for engaging in a fraudulent scheme to manipulate volumes and price of the company's shares. Additionally, the regulator had impounded wrongful gains of Rs 6.38 crore made by some of the entities from the manipulative scheme. *—PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

PepsiCo India revenue in Apr-Dec 2023 at Rs 5,954 crore, profit Rs 217 crore

NEW DELHI, 27 JULY

Pepsico India Holdings' consolidated revenue from operations during April-December 2023 was at Rs 5,954.16 crore and profit was Rs 217.26 crore, according to financial data accessed by business intelligence platform Tofler.

Total income, which also includes other income, was at Rs 6,094.70 crore in the nine-month period.

The company has changed its financial year from April-March to January-December, hence it has come out with three quarters results of 2023. It follows the calendar year as financial year from January 2024. During the nine months, its revenue from sales in the domestic market was at Rs 5,533.63 crore. Exports contributed Rs 266.19 crore to the total revenue of the company, which is not a publicly listed entity. Revenue from the snacks business in which it operates with brands including Kurkure, Lays, Doritos and Quaker was at Rs 4,763.29 crore. Pepsico India's revenue from the beverages business in which it operates with fizz-based drinks and juices with brands such as Pepsico, 7up, slice, Tropicana, and Gatorade was at Rs 1,036.53 crore for the nine months.

Advertising promotional expenses in April-December 2023 were at Rs 694.52 crore.

On the results, a PepsiCo India Spokesperson said: "In this 9-month period compared to the earlier 12-month period, PepsiCo India delivered resilient topline performance amid a challenging external environment." In 2022-23 PepsiCo India's revenue from operations was at Rs 8,203.19 crore and its total profit was at Rs 267.43 crore. Total income was Rs 8,302.34 crore. *—PTI*

DESPITE INCENTIVES FOR EVS

'Hybrid, CNG vehicles will sell more in medium term'

NEW DELHI, 27 JULY

The hybrid vehicles in India including CNG and other alternative vehicles will be more successful in the medium term as compared to the electric vehicles, highlights a report by UBS, an investment banking firm.

The report noted that despite various incentives, launches, and price reductions, the share of EVs in the passenger car market remains below 2.5 per cent, lagging behind strong hybrids.

"We expect hybrids/CNG and other alternative fuels to be more successful over the medium term" said the report.

The report also added that India's passenger vehicle (PV) industry is expected to see revenue growth ranging from high-single to low-double digits over the fiscal years 2024 to 2027.

The report noted that despite various incentives, launches, and price reductions, the share of EVs in the passenger car market remains below 2.5 per cent, lagging behind strong hybrids PHOTO: FREEPIK

This growth is anticipated to be driven by a combination of a 6-7 per cent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) in vehicle volumes and a 3-4 per cent CAGR in average selling prices (ASPs). The report suggests that the demand will be primarily fueled by the increasing popularity of SUVs, while entry-level cars may not experience significant recovery until at least fiscal year 2026.

- Despite a current slowdown in demand, the report forecasts a 7 per cent CAGR for both two-wheeler (2W) and car volumes over the same period, which aligns with the real GDP growth rate

Despite a current slowdown in demand, the report forecasts a 7 per cent CAGR for both two-wheeler (2W) and car volumes over the same period, which aligns with the real GDP growth rate.

This growth is expected to be supported by a rise in the popularity of 125cc two-wheelers and SUVs, reflecting a broader trend towards premiumization in the vehicle market. *—ANI*

India hopes for Olympic glory

Satwik-Chirag make good start

PARIS, 27 JULY

Ace Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen beat Kevin Cordon of Guatemala in straight games in a group match of the men's singles badminton competition at the Paris Olympics here on Saturday.

The 22-year-old Sen won 21-8 22-20 against reigning Pan American champion Cordon in his Olympics debut match that lasted 42 minutes. Sen, a gold medallist at the 2022 Commonwealth Games and bronze winner at 2021 World Championships, will face Julien Carraggi of Belgium on Monday in his second group match.

Cordon fought back in the second game and was 6-2 ahead after a fine net play. The Indian closed the gap at 6-8 after a nice smash. But Sen was more error prone in the second game than in the first and he trailed 7-12 at the change of ends.

The third-seeded duo of Satwik-Chirag, the reigning Asian Games champions, notched up a 21-17 21-14 win against the French pair of Lucas Corvee and Ronan Labar in a Group C match while Sen beat Tokyo edition semifinalist Kevin Cordon of Guatemala 21-8 22-20 in a Group C contest of the men's singles.

Barring Bhaker's brilliant show, it was a forgettable opening day for the Indian shooters who could not reach the final of men's 10m air pistol and 10m air rifle mixed team events. Bhaker, who was in control for the major part of the one hour 15 minute session, will have to maintain the same composure in the all-important final at the National Shooting Centre here on Sunday

India's lone rower in Paris Olympics, Balraj Panwar moved to the repechages after finishing fourth in heat 1 of the men's singles scull competition here on Saturday. In repechages, Panwar will have a second chance to advance to the semifinals or finals.

—PTI

SHOOTING | TIME: 12.45 PM

10M AIR RIFLE WOMEN'S, QUALIFICATION

Elavenil Valarivan, 24, Cuddalore

SHE WON FIRST AT THE 2019 ISSF 10-METER AIR RIFLE WORLD CUP SCORING 251.7 IN RIO DE JANEIRO

Ramita Jindal, 20, Haryana

JINDAL BAGGED 2 MEDALS AT ASIAN GAMES

10M AIR RIFLE MEN'S, QUALIFICATION: TIME: 02.45

Sandeep Sing, 28, Madhya Pradesh

Arjun Babuta , 25, Punjab

BADMINTON | TIME: 12.50 PM

WOMEN'S SINGLES, GROUP PLAY STAGE

PV Sindhu, 29, Hyderabad

Vs Fathimath Nabaaha

MEN'S SINGLES, GROUP PLAY STAGE: TIME: 8:00

HS Prannoy, 32, Delhi

Vs Fabian Roth

PRANNOY MADE HISTORY BY SECURING THE BRONZE MEDAL IN THE MEN'S SINGLES CATEGORY AND BECAME THE 5TH INDIAN MEN'S SINGLES PLAYER

SWIMMING| TIME: 02.30 PM IST

MEN'S 100M BACKSTROKE, HEATS

Srihari Nataraj, 23, Bengaluru

HE CAPPED OFF THE NATIONAL GAMES LAST YEAR WITH 10 MEDALS (8 GOLD, 1 SILVER AND 1 BRONZE) ACROSS BACKSTROKE AND FREESTYLE EVENTS. HE EARNED THE 'BEST MALE ATHLETE' TITLE

WOMEN'S 200M FREESTYLE, HEATS

Dhinidhi Desinghu, 14, Bengaluru

SHE IS THE YOUNGEST ATHLETES FROM ASIA AT PARIS. SHE WON 7 GOLD MEDALS AT THE NATIONAL GAMES

TENNIS | TIME: 3.30 PM

MEN'S SINGLES, FIRST ROUN

Sumit Nagal, 26, Haryana

Nagal is now the 4th-highest-ranked Indian male tennis player since 1973.

TABLE TENNIS | TIME: 2.15 PM

MEN'S SINGLES, ROUND OF 64, TIME: 3.00 PM

Sharath Kamal, 42, Chennai

KAMAL HOLDS A RECORD 10 NATIONAL TABLE TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIP TITLES AND HAS SECURED 13 MEDALS AT COMMONWEALTH GAMES, INCLUDING 7 GOLDS.

WOMEN'S SINGLES, ROUND OF 64

Sreeja Akula, 25, Hyderabad

WOMEN'S SINGLES, ROUND OF 64, TIME: 4.30 PM

Batra had won 3 gold medals at the 2016 South ASIAN

BOXING| TIME: 3.50 PM

WOMEN'S 50KG, PRELIMS - ROUND OF 32

Nikhat Zareen, 28, Nizamabad

SHE WON GOLD IN THE 52KG CATEGORY AT THE 2022 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS AND THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES

ARCHERY| TIME: 5.45 PM

WOMEN'S TEAM, 1/8 ELIMINATION ROUND

Bhajan Kaur,18, Haryana

KAUR WON BRONZE AT WORLD ARCHERY YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIPS, 2023

Deepika Kumari, 30, Ranchi

KUMARI WON 2 SILVER MEDALS IN THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

ANKITA BHAKAT, 26, KOLKATA

DJOKOVIC, SWIATEK REGISTER EMPHATIC WIN

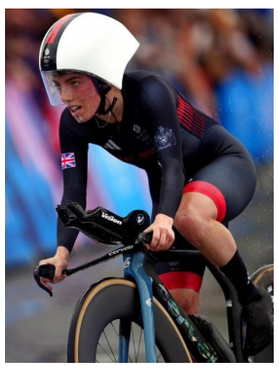
PARIS, 27 JULY

Novak Djokovic's bid for a much-wanted Olympic gold medal began in style with a 6-0 6-1 demolition of Matthew Ebden. He needed just 54 minutes to beat Australia's Ebden, who was playing his first singles match for two years. Djokovic could potentially face long-time rival Rafael Nadal next.

Gold medal favourite Iga Swiatek began her Olympic campaign with a testing victory over Irina-Camelia Begu in Paris. She had to fight hard in a tight second set to see off the Romanian 6-2 7-5.

IOC apologises for introducing S Koreans as N Korean

Olympic Games organisers said they "deeply apologise" for introducing South Korea's athletes as North Korea during the opening ceremony in Paris. As the South Korean athletes waved their nation's flag on a boat floating down the Seine River Friday evening, they were announced in both French and English as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. South Korea is the Republic of Korea. The South Korean Ministry of Culture Sports and Tourism Vice Minister Jang Mi Ran requested a meeting with IOC President Thomas Bach over the incident. *—BBC News/PTI*



GB's Henderson wins Olympic time trial silver

PARIS, 27 JULY

Great Britain's Anna Henderson won a cycling road time trial silver medal on her Olympic debut on the rain-soaked streets of Paris. The 25-year-old, who has twice broken her collarbone this season, stopped the clock on Pont Alexandre III in 41 minutes 9.83 seconds. Gold went to Australia's Grace Brown who, in a remarkable performance, finished more than a minute and a half quicker than Henderson, with the United States' world champion Chloe Dygert taking bronze. "I had a small feeling that maybe I could push for the podium," Henderson told BBC Sport. "To be second behind somebody like Grace Brown, I can't believe it! I burst into tears when I found out! "All the effort this year has been worth it. It has been a really rough year, so to achieve a goal like this is unbelievable." *—BBC News*

OLYMPICS MEDAL TALLY

TEAMS	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE	TOTAL
CHINA	2	0	0	2
BELGIUM	1	0	1	2
JAPAN	1	0	1	2
KAZAKHISTAN	1	0	1	2
INDIA	0	0	0	0

CHINA WINS GOLD IN OLYMPICS IN MIXED TEAM AIR RIFLE

CHATEAROUX, 27 JUL

China has won the first gold medal of the Paris Olympics, but its athletes were nowhere near Paris.

The Olympic shooting range, a three-hour drive from Paris in the city of Chateauroux, was the venue for Huang Yuting and Sheng Lihao to shoot for gold in the 10m air rifle mixed team event held Saturday morning.

Huang and Sheng opened up an early four-point lead against South Korea's Keum Jihyeon and Park Hajun in the head-to-head for the gold medal and stayed ahead from there to win 16-12.

"My main feeling is just happiness. The match was quite hard, but being able to do a personal best performance helped a lot," Sheng said.

The 17-year-old Huang and 19-year-old Sheng's celebrations were initially subdued — in contrast to their animated coach — but they smiled and Sheng gave a thumbs-up sign on the podium when bronze medalist Islam Satpayev took a selfie with his fellow medalists. *—AP*

FLY IN THE SKY

Suryakumar Yadav celebrates his fifty; Rishabh Pant plays a shot during the first T20 International cricket match of a series between India and Sri Lanka on Satuday in Sri Lanka; India beat Sri Lanka by 43 runs in first T20 International in Pallekele **PHOTOS: PTI**

India Women to face SL in Asia Cup final

DAMBULLA, 27 JULY

Defending champions India will look to translate their overwhelming dominance in the Women's Asia Cup to a record-extending eighth title while facing a feisty Sri Lanka in the final here on Sunday.

India have lorded over their opponents in this continental showpiece – hammering Pakistan by seven wickets and followed it up with facile wins over UAE (78 runs), Nepal (82 runs), and Bangladesh (10 wickets).

India's top-order batters and bowlers fired in tandem, not giving their rivals even an iota of chance to mount a fight.

Openers Smriti Mandhana and Shafali Verma have scored well in excess of 100 runs and at a healthy strike-rate of over 140, giving India solidity and quick starts alike at the top.

But the management could be even more pleased with the way bowlers responded to the challenge, particularly Deepti Sharma and Renuka Singh.

Sri Lanka will face India **PHOTO: © X/@BCCIWOMEN**

While there is no palpable worry in the Indian camp, they may just be a tad concerned about the lack of batting time for skipper Harmanpreet Kaur and Jemimah Rodrigues.

Harmanpreet has batted just twice in three matches, even though she made a riveting 66 in one of them, while Rodrigues is yet to hit the top gear here in three innings. *—PTI*

Atletico to sign Spain defender Robin Le Normand

MADRID, 27 JULY

Spain defender Robin Le Normand will join Atletico Madrid on a transfer from Real Sociedad, the two clubs said Saturday. The 27-year-old Le Normand helped Spain win the European Championship earlier this month. Both clubs said the deal would be finalized "in the coming days." Neither revealed the financial details of the transfer nor did Atletico say how many seasons Le Normand would sign for. Le Normand played 221 games for Sociedad and helped it win the 2020 Copa del Rey. He will join an Atletico side coached by Diego Simeone, who demands tough defence from his teams. Atletico also said that defender Stefan Savic would leave the club after nine seasons. *—AP*

New season will be survival of fittest for City: Ten Hag

MANCHESTER CITY, 27 JULY

Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag wants to draw a line under uncertainties of the past and look forward to a season he believes will represent "a survival of the fittest".

The manner of his side's FA Cup final win over Manchester City at Wembley in May almost certainly kept Ten Hag in a job. Confirmation of the 54-year-old's renewed appointment – with the triggering of a one-year option in his contract which will keep the former Ajax boss at Old Trafford until 2026 – came after a lengthy review by new co-owners Ineos. Ten Hag bullishly stated that "if they don't want me, I will go and win somewhere else" in the aftermath of the

Ten Hag **PHOTO: X**

FA Cup success. It was a sign of his self-belief, although Ten Hag is keen to draw a line under the uncertainty at the start of a tour on which United have been joined by new chief executive Omar Berrada, sporting director Dan Ashworth and technical director Jason Wilcox," said Ten Hag. "I believe in myself. We had to wait very long but by the end we got the reward.

—BBC NewSs

RAIN EXPECTED

Belgian GP: Verstappen fastest in final practice

SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS, 27 JULY

Max Verstappen clocked the fastest time in a final practice session at the Belgian Grand Prix that was largely washed out by heavy rain on Saturday.

Lance Stroll caused a red flag after he spun his Aston Martin off and smacked into the barriers, bending his front left wheel.

Before that accident, Verstappen put in the fastest time, with water spray lingering in the air behind his path. Oscar Piastri, in his McLaren, had the second-best lap.

Stroll's crash came with more than half the hour-long session remaining. But, with

Lance Stroll caused a red flag after he spun his Aston Martin off and smacked into the barriers, bending his front left wheel **PHOTO: X/@MAX33VERSTAPPEN**

puddles forming on the track, the cars stayed in the garages.

Drivers and engineers watched the drops fall before the cars ventured out with around two minutes remaining.

No driver got in more than seven laps.

More rain is forecast for qualifying later, although it appears Sunday's race will be held under dry conditions.

Lando Norris put in the fastest time in his McLaren during Friday's practice, on a dry track.

Verstappen holds a relatively comfortable 76-point lead over Norris in the overall standings despite having gone three races without a win for the first time since 2021.

Verstappen has won here for the last three years on the long seven-kilometre track set in the forested hills of the Ardennes. *—AP*